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P O E M S

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By
HUBERT CHURCH

MELBOURNE
THOMAS C. LOTHIAN

1912

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MOUNT EGMONT

WHAT temple shall I enter at thy feet,
What sacrament availeth here below,
That I do penance till all thought is sweet,
And pure as thy investiture of snow?
Let me but hear thy cloudy music fall,
Not the far thunder, but the tacit shower
Of secrecies revealing thee, till all
My heart encloseth rest like a shut flower

How silent, where the unperturbing sea
Frets not the border of thy seraph air,
As one who to the Earth's enchantment free
Loves her too much for thy eternal prayer.
Sad symbol of our hearts that so forget
The quiet haven for the troubled foam,
Breaking upon the reefs that overset
The sail that beateth evermore for home.

Thou hast a morn remembered when all streams
Poured from thy bosom through a forest hid
By Silence from the eddy of day's beams
That would disturb her bough-enchanted lid.
No song of men, no gladness, no refrain
Of the blithe axe re-echoing can reclude
The time thou hadst the sunshine and the rain
Interpreters for thee and Solitude.

We stand beneath thy unitary power,

We watch thee when no cloud a shadow throws
Upon thy stole of glory in the hour

The sunset is a pilgrim to thy snows ;
And there is never heart that doth not climb

With the meek evening to thine altar peak,
And, failing, doth not sorrow for the time

Prayer touched us so, and nightly God would
speak.

Thy footstool is the land, but far away

The intangible, dim girdle of the sea
Folds thee for ever like the Milky Way

Andromeda—'tis fitting thou shouldst be
Lovelier and more monumental shown

To the eternal wave than to the shore ;
It knoweth what e'en thou hast never known
And murmureth it to thee evermore.

The sound that is the ivy of the beach

Hath harmony beyond all earthly song ;
Oh, thou that hast for ever heard it, teach

My heart some fragment, so it may belong
To all my being—and as thou dost shine

A greater temple to the changeless sea,
Be it my glory that I am divine

Less to the world than to Eternity.

BOWEN FALLS, MILFORD SOUND

O WATERFALL that fallest to the sea,
Falling for ever to white virginals
Of olden melody ! thy voice I hear
In molten moments of the summer stars
When the great sun is dead in majesty.

From the white fields of home like thee I came
Impetuous to the cliffs, and I have poured
Treasure of love on altars cold, as thou
Hast showered thy rainbow on the icy rocks,
That have not felt thy kiss,—and I would die.

Athwart the hollows of the moon-fed air
Come eider tremors of thy dying plunge,
Surceasing as child-tired eyelids droop
Upon a wavy bosom, rocked with love
Poured from the heaven for ever like thy song.

The moon is kissing thy keen diadem,
Sick for her barrenness, and all her face
Creeps to thy white arc down the precipice,
As I have nestled, yearning with wild eyes,
Into the umber chancels of a soul.

THE OLD SANDHILLS, HOBART

OLD Sandhills, do you know my name,
Do you remember where my feet
Danced like will o' the wisp flame
As light as elfin heart could beat ?
Behind me was the slumbering town,
About me was the father's hand,
Does ever wind of thistle down
Fall quite so soft upon your sand ?

Old Sandhills, when we played together,
Chariot clouds, and the jocund weather,
Whalers oozed beside the jetty
Odour of the spermaceti ;
Mists were round them—ragged snows
From the dark South—sneaking floes
Of hunger evermore
By a desolate shore.

Old Sandhills, you will stay,
Whatsoever the wind shall say
To the city. Parapets,
Towers and palaces, and nets
Of jangling streets, all, all, shall go !
The old wind knows it, they can hear
A prophecy ; the turret sheer
Shall scatter like a moorland snow,
And perish like a star that swam
Above a city of Abraham.

Old Sandhills, when a bark went down
Heavily in Dolomieu,
The gleam-gull marked the sailor drown,
But the undertow for you
Warped him with invisible kedge
To your rampart, and you knew
Many a bone within your ledge.
For you are old, and Tasman gazed
Athwart your smoothness, and his curse
Was over all when sunset blazed
This ragged end of the universe.

Old Sandhills, voices move about
The wind-whipped funnel of your slope—
Would God my heart renewed the shout
Of forty years ago, when Hope
Peeped over every curling wave
To find a mermaid in its fall,
And thought its glowing arch her cave,
And all its music but her call.
I dare not turn a haunted glance—
Pale ghosts will glimmer thro' the waste,
Each Memory's golden circumstance,
With love and childhood interlaced,
Falls on me thro' a veil of tears
The dead's imagination hears.

Come thou, dear presence of the past,
Forget with me the looping years
That link the joy that could not last
To the insufferable tears
Of days remembering thee—again
Pace with me that enchanted shore
Where we have watched the prisoned rain
Delight the sunbow evermore ;
And where thy staff has written large
My name upon the woven sand
The jealous wave shuts in its marge,
Come with me till the breeze has fanned
Thy tired eyes that do but move
Thro' daily toil to daily love.

Oh dreary beat of waves that follow
Compelling winds, repeat no more
Your melancholy dirges hollow,
Full-fitted to this vacant shore.
My heart with thee, beloved, is sleeping—
If thou art here, my soul abides
In the eternal furrow sweeping
Above the spent breath of the tides.
Or, if the wind thy spirit carries
Athwart the Derwent's drifting foam
To love's own roof, my being tarries
With thee in its created home !

CAPE RAOUL, TASMAN'S PENINSULA

SCAR, ever frowning to the Southern pole
Over a sullen ocean, thou hast seen
Splendour of God and devilry of men,
Earthquake and tempest, and the stubborn soul
Of the oppressor ; now thou art a scroll
Where Time has writ the fury that has been,
And thou for solace on the clouds dost lean,
From their full utterance gathering a soft toll.

The surges at thy base for ever thunder,
The piping winds like haggard spirits wail,
And from afar the melancholy main,
Tinged as if Sorrow's palace was thereunder,
Yearns to thee for its solitary pain
Unsoothed by the magic of a sail,

AKAROA HEADS

OH ! what a solitude is all around
The hermit sea, the splintered cliff that falls
In altars on eternal pedestals
That make the wilderness a holy ground !
Yet surely do I hear an ancient sound,
Barbaric worship in these massy walls,
Souls bared to heaven where now the seamew calls,
Wild rapture where is now a death profound.

Oh ! may my spirit never fail to soar
Far from the foamy fabric of the brine
And all the shallow coil that cumpers Life,
Lest I be like this desolated shore,
For ever fretted, and for ever strife,
A soul whose altars are no more divine.

SPRING IN NEW ZEALAND

THOU wilt come with suddenness,
 Like a gull between the waves,
 Or a snowdrop that doth press
 Through the white shroud on the graves ;
 Like a love too long withheld,
 That at last has over-welled.

What if we have waited long,
 Brooding by the Southern Pole,
 Where the towering icebergs throng,
 And the inky surges roll :
 What can all their terror be
 When thy fond winds compass thee ?

They shall blow through all the land
 Fragrance of thy cloudy throne,
 Underneath the rainbow spanned
 Thou wilt enter in thine own,
 And the glittering earth shall shine
 Where thy footstep is divine.

A SWALLOW IN NEW ZEALAND

DEAR Swallow from a fonder sky !

Why do you leave your happy mate
Within the golden lands that lie

Beyond the evening's shadowy gate ?
Ah, tender wings ! you bear a load
That only Memory may see—
The fragrance of my Youth's abode,
The ecstasy of life to me !

It may be that their beat has weaved
A path by Childhood's starry creek,
Where jealous ferns droop interleaved
To hear the whispering waters speak ;
And thou, perchance, hast flown aloof
Athwart the garden sweet and wild,
And rested on the sheltering roof
Where tender Love and I have smiled !

Already thou on ceaseless wings
Art bidden to thy loved return ;
To all thy flight my vision clings,
For far-off home like thee I yearn ;
And through the warm, unfolding tears
I see the sacred fount again
That poured the Joy of Childhood's years—
The still, supremest heart of Pain !

NELSON

THY sun that set at Trafalgar and shed
Glory on England, like a star that dies
Leaving the earth a light though it be dead,
Flames evermore to our believing eyes.
We cannot doubt thee, Nelson ; thou hast placed
Thy spell upon the battle-haunted sea
That we have loved, and there thy name is traced ;
We cannot love it without loving thee.

Oh, splendour of renown where every tide
Floated thy menace to the foeman's shore.
What if the eagle in the dome abide,
Outwatching tempests far below—no more
Than thy great realm his empery ; the wind
Bore thy unconquerable thunder far,
Till death that loveth sacrifice was kind
To thee, for ever England's avatar.

Like Wycliffe's ashes thy dear shade has passed
Over the waters of the earth that we
Should find our freedom ; we shall hold it fast
Till England is no longer true to thee.
And we her children far upon the main,
Where never any but her cannon call,
Share for thy triumph her immortal pain,
For thee the humblest keep a festival.

HANS ANDERSEN

DEAR master of the faint flute of the herbs,
The crystal revel of the stream that flows
By magic furrows where the wind disturbs
Rich drony moths upon the plaited rose ;
Alone thou hearest where the wild swan dips
His crest beneath the torrent of the morn,
Alone thou seest from his tender lips
The sun's last smile to fairy Matterhorn.

The nightingale that in a forest spent
Her lovely soul in music for a lord
Of empery, distilling bland content
Threw all herself to thee as thou adored.
She is not of the earth, and thou art free
From low communion, like her quivering wings,
That ache for all despair that song can be,
Th' impenetrable heart of sacred things !

Through thee the lowliest do achieve renown,
The unsought grace of solitude is theirs,
But thou dost give such eremites a crown,
From thee they take our happiness and tears,
What though the violet leans athwart a stone
And hears but rivulet or nightingale,
Her secrecies surprised by thee alone
Shall charm young hearts in immemorial tale

What largesse of all magic ! Does the bird
Lament thee in her thicket ? Shall her note
Fall where alone a stealthy leaf is stirred
By sleeping castle in a sleepy moat,
And never heart be there her song to tell
Nor any cunning weaver of her brain ?
Shall we for ever watch the citadel,
And never see the sanctuary again ?

HARRY ALBERT ATKINSON

(Karori Cemetery)

EARTH that holds him, he withheld
From the vulgar herd the tide
That within his spirit welled ;
Here he sleepeth sanctified,
Like a kauri monarch felled.

From the triumph of the North,
Where the battle shook the boughs,
By the shade of Egmont's wrath,
Thunder-menace of his brows,
He with Constancy came forth !

Brow with all the ruggedness
Roman lapidary carved
Never let the shrine confess
That its marble urn was halved
With remotest tenderness.

He was steadfast, he was true,
Like the breeze that finds the cliff
Whatsoever the darkness do ;
Like the ripple to the skiff
Was his heart to them that knew !

Labour that had never gleaned
Tithe of its delicious rest
Broke the heart that duty weaned
From the quiet of the blest—
Till, worn out, on death he leaned.

Hear ! O Land, to whom he gave
All the absolute design
Of his strenuous thought; the grave
Keeps him, he can make no sign,
Not a memory can crave !

But you will not let him fall
From the grateful heart that keeps
With the dead a festival,
Where remembrance never weeps,
Though love shadoweth it all !

We shall gather from his shade
High endeavour, word austere
Of the truth that he has made
Pole for tribune chart, and here
We shall tremble, unafraid !

ROSALIND

ROSALIND has come to town !
All the street's a meadow,
Balconies are beeches brown
With a drowsy shadow,
And the long-drawn window panes
Are the foliage of her lanes.

Rosalind about me brings
Sunny brooks that quiver
Unto palpitating wings
Ere they kiss the river,
And her eyes are trusting birds
That do nestle without words.

Rosalind ! to me you bear
Memories of a meeting
When the love-star smote the air
With a pulse's beating :
Does your Spirit love to pace
In the temple of that place ?

Rosalind ! be thou the fane
For my soul's uprising,
Where my heart may reach again
Thoughts of heaven's devising :
Be the solace self-bestowed
In the shrine of Love's abode !

MARGARET

WHAT were it, dear, to gather you
Like a harvest glebe the dew ;
And to find at breath of morn
Heaven with my waking born ?
With your footfall in my house,
Love should flutter on the stair
Lighter than a flitting mouse
At the sound of chantress fair
Singing an old cithern air.

Here the bat's wing weaves a sound
Like the foam on velvet sand
Of fairy gulfs ; the rain has bound
Cobweb to the stalks that stand
Sentinels of sleep ; and, tired,
In branches breathes the dying wind,
Flown from the bleak Antipodes ;
Inheriting the sleep desired
Through the illimitable seas.

The garden wall is faint with light
Lo ! the evening looking through
The sunset, calleth to the Night
To follow. Margaret, are you

The evening of my Soul, to call
Love to follow ? Within the shade,
Where the spider ladders fall ;
Where the breeze a porch hath made
Through the willow boughs—within
Love's uncharted wilderness,
Where the track is happiness,
And the star to lead, a kiss—
Margaret, shall we be this ?

A TOAST

It were a fault to drink
Save in a subtle wine,
(The cup full to the brink,
That glancing gold should shine
Where velvet shadows sink,)
To one who is divine !

No name shall we disclose,
But dream of her whose eyes
Have magic with the rose,
Within whose depths arise
Thoughts that are born of those
Cradled in Paradise !

AT HER GATE

I

How blest the wandered bird that sings
With such a woodland ecstasy,
Till song is Sorrow's self, and he
Folds on thy roof his fretted wings,
All pain forgotten when with thee !

Thus would my wandered heart achieve
(So far outborne on wayward tide)
A still roof in thy heart, to hide
Shielded from lonely Night, and weave
Youth's dream again, and there abide !

II

One bird upon the roof,
A chorister forlorn,
Sings to the cloistered Morn,
Hid in her cloudy woof,
A song that doth unfold
Itself in plaited gold.

Sing what I ne'er can say—
The wave may love the shore,
The flowers the dews that pour,
The tired winds love to stay
On cliffs where moss has lain,
Spent with the toiling main.

Dearer to me one heart
Where I would love to dwell,
Woven with magic spell
Into its inner part;
Sunk in its secrecy
Like a star in the sea.

FIDELIS

FIDELIS was the word,
A rosebud smile the wand
To touch my soul that stirred
All ecstasy beyond,
Like a soaring bird.

The bird is in the skies,
My heart was even there,
Where Summer's cradle lies
Rocked by a secret air
Slipped from Paradise.

The Summer light it goes,
The bird away it flies,
And Love is one with those :
The rose that never dies
Never was a rose.

FYNEDUN CASTLE

At Fynedun Castle the girls
Walk like a schooner's glide ;
The wind that shakes their curls
Loosening loves that hide
In filleted hair
Finds none elsewhere
Like them o'er the wold and tide.

At Fynedun Castle a bird
Broke at the breath of dawn ;
Philida's voice I heard,
Or thrush at a lonely lawn.
However it be,
Throstle or she,
The thread of my fate was drawn.

At Fynedun Castle I found
Philida's smile that makes
All eve like elfin sound
Of horn that leaps the lakes,
When you see the night
With her purpled light
Footing the moors and brakes.

Fynedun Castle, adieu !

Philida goes with me ;

What shall remain to you,

Philida over the sea ?

You will keep for grace

The light of her face ;

Remember what that can be !

THE YOUNG HEART

Ah, if she go away
Before the moonlight fall
Like manna on the bay,
What shall I do but call
Her lovely name, to be
The dark's delight to me ?

What rover on the hill
Shall find within the horn
Her melody to fill
The night, the noon, the morn,
With everything that sleeps
In Music's wayward deeps ?

What flower, or bird, or sea,
Shall charm her woodland eyes
Beyond their grace to me,
Beyond their sweet surprise ;
The most that Love can find
In her, like him too blind ?

BY THE SEA

DAY is at noon, and one cloud,
A glory of snowy rings,
Over the city is bowed,
Poised on ethereal wings,
Like a stainless spirit and proud
Scorning earthly things.

The sea is about my feet,
Folding in shallow waves
Music as sad and sweet
As a bruised spirit craves ;
Like voices when angels meet
Over children's graves.

But the flower of my soul's content
Not the cloud, nor the sea,
With all their loveliness blent,
Can restore unto me ;
For the flower of my soul with its scent
Is with thee—with thee !

UNATTAINABLE

STAINLESS icicle so cold,
Was there ever heart so bold,
Made a mastery so felt,
That your spirit could but melt ?

From love's fiery-laden eyes
Looking on you to surmise
All your magic you do turn,
Like a vestal to her urn.

In to-morrow there may be
Such a sun to conquer thee
As shall win the sleeping soul
Hidden from us at its pole ;

He shall gather all the light
Shielded from all other sight,
Bathe in the mysterious stream
That to others is a dream !

ADRIFT

THE weary, slow, unfolding wave
Lips the dim softness of the cave,
Whispering the chancel of the sea
How sweet it is in peace to be.

Ah, witchery of dying hours !
Oh, pain of adamantine powers !
That draw the full, reluctant tide
From where its slumber would abide.

Thus have I dreamt to dwell with thee,
But thou hast said it may not be,
And now I drift for evermore
Far from thy soul's secluded shore.

For thine could never make return :
Love's lonely vigil did but learn
To show thee, dearest one, in vain
Its incommunicable pain

CONVALESCENT

LAY roses here, and lift
The curtain, let me be
One that may share the gift
Of sunset with the sea ;
But lord alone with thee !

How good it is to dream
That thou art near my side !
As fountains make the stream
Thy heart to me shall glide,
Pouring pellucid tide.

To waken—thou art there !
Heart to heart leaps, afraid
To lose one smile ; thy hair
Tent for a kiss has made,
Dusking it with the braid.

Hast thou within thee stored
Arabian night that breaks
Magical wave adored
On slumber's strand that takes
The rainbow curve Love makes !

Or whither came that glance ?
Greek maid of Tempe's vale
Scattered it ; in Provence
Proud Beauty let it fail
At sunset on a sail ;

Where troubadour let fall
Music that words have twined,
For ever wedded, all
The soul, to earth confined,
Ever of heaven divined !

Dearest, when you come in,
Crusaders shadow walls,
The camp of Saladin
Is round me, Richard calls
Derision to his thralls.

Then shallops thinly fade
White wings by minaret
With twisted columns, jade
And agate, dimly set
Far from the city's fret.

Or Ganges bears thee slow
By tamarind and tower,
Jungle, where to and fro
The tiger in his bower
Licks the appointed hour.

Dost thou remember, dear,
The soul of Ronsard dead ?
Art thou a rondel clear
Once chambered by him, shed
To soothe a stricken bed ?

Deny it not ! around
Thy shadow are the wings
Of nestling birds, the sound
Of Summer where she sings
Of immemorial things.

So let it be—thy touch
Is like the evening wind
That bloweth softly, such
As men would pray to bind
About a tangled mind.

Then let the great world slide ;
I follow by a shore
Unfooted, and abide
With thee, to gather store
Of Love for evermore !

SHADOWS

How many tread the patient street
With heart so sanctified as mine :
Who have a shadow at my feet
Whereof no other hath a sign ?
No other sees the tender face
Fledging the drab and stony place.

I see through gloomy archway walls
The scattered sandhills of the past :
An air from meadow pipit calls
Where I her shadow followed fast.
Beneath the pavement of the street
Lieth the motion of her feet.

Lo, there she sped by lichened fence
The glance where sudden love appears :
Pale with retreating confidence,
Too shy for words, too sweet for tears :
Too full of her own happiness
To pledge what love would fain confess.

There she abides amid the roar
Of city struggles. Men are made
Joyful or sad, but I am more
Than they who pass me—unafraid
To lift a sleeping face to shine
Making me for the hour divine.

A river rolls between. . . . We stand,
Love in all tenderness our star.
No voice we hear : nor understand
The morning and the evening are
To some delighting dedicate,
Wherefore for ever we must wait.

Again—I see the cottage door.
The fire is chattering to the panes :
Flowers make the courtesy of the poor :
The kettle with a singing feigns
A merry note—but all is bare
For lack of one who is not there.

I dream I hear a footfall blend
With airs about the stooping eaves.
The surges of my spirit send
Faint shadows lighter than the leaves
Athwart the attic Silence keeps
In her unfathomable deeps.

No, never more will she descend.

I wake to know life is beyond
Her intimacy. I shall spend

A many tears of memory fond
For eyes that know not kith or kin—
Death's majesty alone therein.

ODE ON METAPHYSICAL THOUGHT

I

LET the breeze blow about me all the prime
Of the unthreaded years, untold
Upon the rosary of Time ;
Let the gull beat his happy wings that fold
All the magic of the dateless Morn
When she looked forth with rosy fingers pressed
On silent lips, and with her smile caressed
Island and sea and gulf yet unforlorn
With the unknelled, the castaway, and sails
For ever ruffled by the wind.
O bird, that to the dark song of the mind
Bearest a music with thy wheeling, tell
If ever in the sun the morning fails
To whisper to thee, like enchanted shell,
Message that we have never gathered home,
No more than we can treasure up the foam.
Thine hour is happiness,
There never comes duress
To thee, illusion ; never is the cloud
All darkness where at night thy head is bowed.

II

Something of thy dominion do I gain,
Dreaming within the faint-communing land
The soul finds in her slumber ;
Somewhere I feel I touch again
Hours hidden by the ages without number,
And for a blessed moment do I stand
Before the past we know had taken shape,
Before the glow of the young world was dim ;
When the uncontaminated mirrored Him,
Floe, sea, and islet, continent and cape.
Yes, I would trench upon thy heritage—
To leave at will the tributary earth,
Rolling to greater orbs—and would assuage
Thought that will ask too much of human dearth.
To soothe our elementary pain,
To vex no more the doubting heart ;
That were above all sunshine and all rain ;
We cannot do it, but I feel apart,
Above, a mighty wand is given,
That we have never found, though we have ever
striven.

III

Would God my heart could be
Uplifted from the banal load

Inherited with our abode !
Would that my spirit leaped to light as thee,
Not with a stagnant mortmain of old thought,
So little satisfying, on the bowed,
Tired children of humanity.
Thou hast the early path for ever sought
By man and never found ;
Oh take me on thy wings from the unholy ground.
Then let me feel (or dream I feel) the cloud
That floats above the droning earth is strewn
An immaterial curtain, from me bowed
Far to the sunken haven of the moon ;
Below me the grey roof
Of the world, and a woof
By the vapour spun
For the laughing sun ;
Here we shall fly, O my soul, till the day be done.

IV

Below the world shall spin ;
Here let my thought begin
Like the soft birth of Eden reveries,
Before the tribulation,
Or the prophecy ;
When the heart knew its own elation

To be the music of the earth and sky ;
When all things were the children of delight,
Nor man abstaining ;
Thought was the shining disc of sight,
And moved with her to the heaven's cloudy veining.

V

Oh, Time, irrevocable for all prayer,
All adoration, all supreme desire,
What if my heart would gather anywhere
One cloud-beat of thy fragrance when the fire
Of the first sun illumined the young sea ;
What if I willed to wander back with thee
Before man brooded on his eternal pain ;
Thou couldst not be again
The unrecordable and free
From all conception men have woven round
Life, death and immortality ;
For ever under thee there is a sound,
It is the moan of men who never Truth have found.
And they have looked for her with eyes
That tired not for their vigil ; they outwatch
Soft-footed centuries ;
They breathe with agony to catch
Her beam like palms of Paradise ;

But she her pennon frees
To loftier worlds, and we descry afar
Some shadow of her splendour like a falling star.

VI

Oh, wealth of imagery men have weaved,
And held it Truth ! Oh, heart that leaps again,
For evermore aspiring, and deceived
For ever with interminable pain !
The rack lies through the tributary past,
Shadow and ruin of philosophy,
Broken as summer cloud—
The heady splendours of young souls to be
Never by sorrow bowed ;
The sombre gloom of weary sages led
Through old despair to pale futility,
Losing themselves in maze
Of windlestraw of phrase,
Until the human heart supremely dowered be
dead.

VII

Yet building ever like the coral reef
For ever to the light, too hard it lies

Upon the heart that its relief
Never doth come until the weaver dies.
Art is all broidery for our despair,
The lance light of the throne we cannot see,
We know not if the anodyne of prayer
Hath aught of sacrament for what shall be ;
We do but build, and scatter everywhere
Flower of our soul in fond hope it is He.

VIII

Behold the ocean of old Time
Traced with dead beliefs ;
Naught visible sublime,
Only grey forgotten reefs,
Where drowned nations who believed
The star led thither, moulder deep,
Their alchemy of Hope achieved
In a sea-change of quiet sleep.
Dreams are about us evermore—
Each hath a dream, a slender web
Spun from the lintel of his door
To the grave where life doth ebb ;
Be it a famed phylactery,
The holy of a temple built
By thorn-grieved worshippers who see
In us a precious balsam spilt ;

Be it forgotten in a day,
A chanceless seedling overblown
By ragged, uncurbed winds away
To the charity of a stone.

IX

All shall perish—from the glow
Of dreaming prophets who have seen
The azure of Heaven's inner bow,
To the dusk of thoughts that lean
On spectral mysteries outworn ;
The flameless lamp of sodden mind
Where a Tashi Lama blinks
Before a multitude that thinks
In him Heaven smiles or is unkind.
Oh, Father, let us be forlorn
No longer in the desert, break
Thy clouds of darkness, oh forsake
Infinity of shade, conceal
No more Thy splendour, oh, reveal!

X

Some diviner Argonaut
Of the drifting sail of thought

Shall discover all the main
We have trembled for in vain.
Under Truth's pavilion cloud
Men shall wander pure and proud,
Ear shall hearken to a word
That no sophistry hath blurred ;
Time shall fold his wing behind,
Death be youth and beauty blind ;
Every heart shall burdened be
With more joy than it can see.

WHO MAY CONDEMN ?

WHAT shall a man condemn,
Whose secret hour has flamed
With turpitude, in them
Found out, dishonoured, shamed ?

You twine your hidden thought,
Lapped in a drowsy prayer
The priest presents—you brought
Another gospel there.

You see beyond the walls
A harlot of young time ;
Her squandered splendour calls
To you through anthem rhyme.

Her eyes you see when lids
Drop down,—the organ jars ;
A dolt the priest who bids
Aspire beyond the stars.

The murmur of the breeze
Evokes the day you held
Her face, near wandering seas
In some white land of eld.

Ah, riot of red days
Unknown to all, for she
Is dead with tears—you praise
The blessed Trinity.

The sullen stone that falls
May crush a virgin bride,
Or, muffled in sea walls,
Roll stainless through the tide.

The harlot of the street,
If Fate had looked away,
Had followed where the feet
Of Jesus make the day.

TO MY DOG

Look ! my Tasso, where the smoke
Rolls beyond the clouds austere,
Far above the kea's stroke,
And the lightning of the drear
Cliff-embattled atmosphere.

Somewhat we have dwelt apart,
Yet the smoke above the strife
Pictures with a vivid art
Sepias of the dizzy life
On the keen edge of the knife.

When the fire was in the brain,
Facile love upon the lips,
Splendid Passion threw the rein
On the fiery coursers' hips,
Scourged by Youth's unsparing whips.

Hard Ambition vainly glozed :
Ours the moment, ours the bliss ;
Love in loving scarce reposed
For a moment, for a kiss,
O'er satiety's abyss.

Oft the mazy-spinning blood
Lifted to the merry horn;
Many a leap athwart the flood
Let us see that Joy is born
Best above the earth forlorn.

Sabres flashed when we were young,
And the sparkle of the blade
Round our heads an aureole flung:
Death himself might be afraid
Of that Paladin brigade!

All are vanished: they are dust,
As a lute whose fingers lie
Curled about a poniard's thrust,—
Alien love whose anthem high
Waked one chamber, but to die

Here upon the giant hills,
Far from fretting of the sword,
And the grinding of the mills
For the harvest of the Lord,
Thou and I make one accord.

Underneath a stunted branch
Evermore our sleep shall be,
Waked not by the avalanche
Or the huddled revelry
Of the cataract to the sea.

Torrents from eternal snow
We alone have ever seen.
Shall leap over us below,
Sanctifying the ravine
In our sepulchre serene.

ON THE CLIFF

COME, let us sit and watch the flowing ships,
Here where your foot has touched a shivering
stone
To leave the merry sunshine for eclipse,
Down, down, for ever, darkened and alone,
Beneath the cozening ripples smooth and cool . . .
What's Life but a poor stone flung in a pool ?

The lying waves have lapped it—oh, poor stone !
Earth has no dearer sight than a warm sea,
Braided with isles, forgetting the far moan
Concealed in the dim Ocean's agony :
But, dear, there lie beneath these shallow waves
Christ knows how many unattended graves.

The waves are all about us—we are one
With the unstable waters and the tides,
Symbols of ever-varying threads bespun
By Fate that never in a mood abides ;
We leave our fretful image here, or go
Without a fateful scion : better so !

We know the motion of a molten star,

We weigh the rapture of the rushing wind,
Unweave the light,—but know not what we are,

Nor whose the fetters that intently bind :
Why we do sorrow, joy, or smile, or weep,
Scatter a little fragrance—then a sleep.

If I were as a shell upon the beach,

The virgin calyx of voluted flowers,
The utter magic of a song to teach

Sorrow a solace in belated hours,
I should be more than I can ever be :
Beggared of doubt, nor wistful all to see.

So be it, dearest ! watch the great Sun die

In marvellous thunder, to our ears unknown,
Music of equal planets that do lie

In the full plane of knowledge : we are thrown
By a capricious hand, the wise, the fool,
Like a poor stone that's flung into a pool !

RETROSPECTION

If there were any of the sons of men
Could win from Fate to hold their youth again,
Would any travel more
The paths they trod before ?

Would any vex those hyacinthine days
For love of woman, or the many's praise ;
The vain delights that trend
To the abhorred end—

Age, that discovers there is nothing worth ? .
God, when He flung this unessential earth,
Spun it with bias given
To sunder it from Heaven !

FAVONIUS

FAVONIUS from the setting sun,
Sigh, sigh not so upon her tresses !
What though thou diest in the dun,
She trembled at thy mute caresses.

The rose shall lose her diadem,
The nightingale shall weep his singing,
And Love shall hear his requiem
From bells that Sorrow sets a-ringing.

Delight is alway in the earth,
From soul to soul a meteor flying.
And as some spirit gives it birth
Some other spirit feels it dying.

HUSH !

SILENCE, for slumber of the children's eyes :
Let not a footfall or a voice be heard,
Nor any sound break on the muffled word
That babbles of their dreaming mysteries !
Far, far beyond us, in a land that lies
Round infancy, their tender souls are stirred,
Flushed with the rapture of a soaring bird
Escaping heavenward with a wild surprise.

Thus would I sleep at last beneath the turf,
A temple by the ever-sounding sea,
All else a stillness, while my soul should be,
Showered with the flame of a celestial light
Beyond the farthest constellation's curve,
Encompassed only by the infinite.

DEAD CHARLES

I SHUT the Comus in my hands,
And let the blind slip gently down ;
Dead Charles went by who understands
All mysteries. I called him clown,
The passive burden children weep,
Who sees beyond my search, asleep.

Dear Charles, you could not hear me groan,
Though you were passing near my door ;
I felt my soul was all alone,
So beggared of all worth, so poor,
Since I had squandered every hour
When thy delight was in my power.

How pitiful my knowledge grows
At thought of thy dear loyal heart ;
Would God, like any clustered rose,
I had bestowed my better part
On you, to find that laboured books
Are naught to one beloved's looks.

There's not in all thy dear one's pain
The anguish that awakes my night.
Thou didst forget, again, again,
My wronging, thy complaintless right ;
Thou didst forgive, and Death has made
My unrelenting heart afraid.

THE OLD TREE

THIS is the garden, thinly set ;
The winds that struggle with pear and pine
 Know the borders that men forget
And Love remembers at day's decline.

Bough that gnarls where a foot has sped,
The birds have envied, with slide of foam,
 Night will cover you till the red
Of dawn is knitted beneath the dome.

Morn will deem it is bright as day
That broke enchanted when Love was new ;
 We shall know the deceit, and say
The old was magical light and true.

Night shall come to us both for pain ;
Time will never renew the morn
 She and I shall enclasp again
The flower unknown that of you was born.

THE TOP O' THE HILL

THE top o' the hill, the hill !
To hold the sail that is dreamed away
As the eyes with all the summer fill,
And the wind lies down in the bay.

The top o' the hill, the hill !
You knew the moss that a foot had turned
To grey a moment—your heart is still,
As it was when its silence yearned.

The top o' the hill, the hill !
You felt the wind of the calling days,
When never a wrong or care could kill,
And you warmed the world with a blaze

The top o' the hill, the hill !
Your eyes shall never beseech again
For beauty, or love, or fire ; the will
To conquer the peak is slain.

THE STAR

I DRAW the curtain, and one Star
Gleams through an opening in the cloud
Above the college—faint and far
Your shining, but your world is proud.

To be a Sun, unchallenged, free,
Unwarped by creeping moon or tide ;
The centre of a planet sea
Where all about thee must abide ;

That were a triumph. Far below
Thy Sovereignty Earth's scant domain ;
Lord but of tropic and of snow,
And the insurgence of the main.

Time is sullen. We bear a bond
Immutable ; and nothing stirs
The oracle to brood beyond
Her answer to dead emperors.

AGED SEVEN YEARS

SHUT in thy little guarded heap,
Thou dost not hear me, such a sleep
Is round thee, that the dusk denied
To thy soft prayer at eventide.

So still, so quiet ! It may be
The fondest sound to agony,
That breaks its heart upon the turf
Like uncompanionable surf,

That has no solace for its moan,
For ever restless and alone ;
The only thing in all the earth
For which no hope has any birth.

Thy toys, who treasures them and holds
Their shape within the heart's deep folds ;
Thy tears, who doth remember all
Their shining when the night doth fall ?

One heart has made a sacrament
Each morning when her eyes are bent
To thy still chamber, at whose door
Are shadowy feet about the floor.

Though fields encompass thee, and flowers
Make girdle for thee through the hours,
Thy living home, at evening prayer,
Recalleth thee, and thou art there.

And in the trinity of love,
My heart, and thee, and prayer above,
I know not if the night can be
Unblest when I remember thee.

ALONE

I HEAR the summer breathing at my door,
So early that the thrush's thankful air
The night is done still sleeps—but nevermore
Will your delight be there.

The shadow on my roof is very small,
The rose will shake it from her petal soon ;
The sun will enter, and my heart will fall
Faint as the little moon

That creeps behind the mountains, there to hide
Oh, would that to her silence I could go ;
Shut from the pain of all that doth abide—
The tears for long ago.

But thou wilt come, beloved, in a dream,
Like a cloud summoned from a misty sea ;
And though it be but sleep my heart will seem
Lifted again by thee.

FAREWELL

FAREWELL ! For thee the earth
Holds never more a hand
That shall retain ; thy birth
Breaks on diviner land
The dead but understand.

Thou couldst not find the path
Of happiness again ;
The burden each one hath
O'erweighted thee amain,
Till all thy strength was slain.

Take in thy hallowed rest
More than our thought can say,
What we with grief opprest
About thy precinct lay ;
Still thou with us shalt stay.

VERA FIGNER

NOTE.—Vera Figner, Russian Revolutionary; a woman of great charm and radiant beauty. She was condemned to imprisonment for life, and for twenty years was immured in the living grave of the Schlüsselburg Fortress. When these lines were composed the writer thought that Vera Figner was still in prison. By a strange chance, on the day after the lines were written, he read that Vera Figner had been released.)

I

VERA FIGNER, when the breezes blow,—

Do you awaken to the hostile morn ?

Or do you live so numbed you do not know,

Like a toad in a granite tempest-worn ?

Vera Figner, are the eyes bedewed

That men had died for in the far-away ?

Is your face like a wounded soul—subdued

To grief that never heals for any day ?

II

Does the clock in the turret tell you now

The morn is vanishing, the day declines ?

Or is all thought beneath the drooping brow

Vacant and gloomy as the winter pines ?

Have men betrampled through the many years

Your soul submitting till its very deep

Has oozed away to dust : till you lack tears,
 Denied the unhappy ones who cannot weep ?

III

Oh marvel of misfortune that a soul
 So full of liberty and love should be
 Tired, ever tired, to creep like any mole
 From wall to wall in darkling vacancy.
 To wrap the rich thought of the brain in death,
 For never any sound may let it forth—
 Oh God, who givest consecrated breath
 To holy truth, why tarryeth Thy wrath ?

IV

Beloved of all spirits that achieve
 Through agony—Oh, miserable, thou,
 Who hast all suffering, but cannot leave
 Thy burden ever ! What is breathing now
 But a poor disinheritance of days ?
 And even that poor remnant is defiled ;
 For thee that shouldst have trod delicious ways
 No morn, no eve, no love, no roof, no child.

V

Thou canst not be endungeoned evermore :
Thy soul is where the breezes blow with pain
Past Ladoga : there is not any shore
That hath not felt thy yearning. If again
Thou hast all agony, thou hast the crown,
The heaven within the spirit that shall save,
Though earth be cruel. Death hath his renown,
But cannot pass our conquerable grave.

SCHLÜSSELBURG

(From the Russian of Vera Figner)

THE best are gone. Within the earth

They lie where never foot will fall.

Not any tear had holy birth

When Death and they were all in all—

Strange hands their bearers; and no word

Of any heart for them was stirred.

This turf alone their altar-cloth,

Whose sacrifice beneath is laid.

The wave that beats the rock in wrath

About their silence never made

Through its eternity of pain

A psalm too mournful for the slain.

DEAD

SILENT, silent, when the dawn
Through the ashen room is drawn,
And it lingers on thy face,
Counterfeiting a fled grace !

As the shadows slip away
To the meadow of the day,
Does not thy persistent heart
Yearn to all its wonted part ?

All the fond, vibrating bars
From the flame of viewless stars
Will not ope the fretted lid
Where thy lovely soul was hid.

Though thou liest there so still
God has shown thee all His will,
And His universe is whole
Unto thy expanding soul.

Thou hast fled from love and moan,
Little children here alone
Stumble for the lamp of love
Thou didst bring them from above.

A DIRGE

COME not with sundered flowers to strew her grave ;
Nor be there any curtain but the grass,
Dewed by the Night and by the winds that pass
Tranced with the slumber of the level wave ;
Or if one cloud of the empyrean nave
Shall float a shadow on her shrouded face,
Be it the shrine of this mysterious place,
Bestowing shelter she for ever gave :

And if the anthem of this holy rood
Fall from the throat of some forgotten bird,
Faint with the press of heaven upon his wings,
Be it the bruised fragrance that is stirred
In the sad heart, remembering happier things
That are the angels of this solitude.

ODE

BREAK as all vows of love that unabides,
Roll on thy strand the slow, smooth arch that
gleams

With fettered magic of the girdling tides
And the ungathered glories of youth's dreams ;
Pierce thy green depths on rocks that are a-cold,
Touch with thy rainbow curve this lonely shore,
But even as thou diest, oh ! unfold
The voices I have heard, and hear no more.

O Sanctuary ! whose eternal foam
Drapes for thanksgiving pedestals profound
Sunk in the depths,—whose altar tops are home
For the white clouds,—shed on me what was
wound

In the young years about my heart, and rolled
Through all my being, a celestial sense . . .
Love that still lips and shuttered eyes have told,
Smiles that elude sad Memory's impotence !

Then thy too solemn dirge shall softly float
Upon the muted strings of Memory's pain,
As a tired wind that fades upon a moat
Too still to welcome its secluded rain ;
And if one tremor shall recall a throb
Long buried in old graves, Oh ! Lord, how sweet
To feel thy benediction in a sob,
And see thee in the tears about my feet.

“ AT EVENTIDE IT SHALL BE LIGHT ”

Is daylight fading, Margaret ?
Are those the bells of eventide ?
Does Darkness gather in her net
The stars that in the sunbeams hide ?

The children's voices, are they not
Hushed in the garden's dewy breath
To whisper in some far-off spot
The simple things of love and death ?

Your hand is cold, my Margaret,
Your eyes are dim through stealthy tears;
Ah, all my soul with grief is wet
To know you not in all these years !

Sweet, now too late I see in vain
Your heart was poured to shallow mould
That could not hold it : once again
Kiss me, and let me lie a-cold.

PARACLETE

TAKE heart of grace, and bear
The burden God has held
Apart for thee, for there
A secret fount has welled.

The gull that frets the foam
That cannot wet its wing
Has made a rock a home
Where Love alone could cling.

And every utter star
Thrown desolately dim
Inclines its planets far
From us, but nearer Him.

The shadow on thy heart
Is but the moving sign
That God is near, thou art
Veiled by Him, divine

EPITAPH

UNDERNEATH this stone I give
Roots the sap by which they live ;
And the bird that plucks a blade
Knows through me the deep, black shade.

Not when I had power to thrill
Heart that loved me—good or ill—
Gave I all the strength divine
God ordained to be mine.

Now, within my shrunken grave,
Death has left me power to save,
To ennoble, them that knew—
Though I slumber, I indue.

EPITAPH

Hic jacet. Here he lies, and is a-cold,
Quiet as any feather of the owl ;
More motionless than weeping clay or mould,
The worm his Carmelite, with dusk for cowl.
Shut, shut the gate, bar out the fruitful world ;
Look where the dandelion is low bending
Above his grave, as if the soul were sending
A muffled message through the darnel curled.
As if the flower could hear, and we not hear it ;
As we do follow Love, but never near it,
Close, close, but still impenetrably furled.

Now all his gains are the strange rewards of Death,
Who took no measure of the shadow thrown
Along the path of life, where Evil saith :
“Come live with me, and lie with me, alone.”
Now all he strove for, like the wave denied
The habitual sand, for ever is forsaken.
Indifferent, command can not awaken
The fretted spirit death hath sanctified ;
Who the wild heath has chosen for abiding ;
Deep, deep within its roots, as if in hiding,
Where the day helpeth not, with night allied,

HYMN

For thy tender mercies, Lord !
Hear me when the night hath stored
All her dark leagues with the Sin
I have made my Cherubin.

In my chamber they do stand,
Though I shrink they clasp my hand.
I remembering they have made
My delight, Lord, am afraid.

Canst Thou enter, Lord, again
With Thy mercy's cleansing rain ;
Make defilement pure and sweet
With the whiteness of Thy feet ?

Let me not be thrust aside !
Thou art more than crucified
If withholding when adored—
For Thy tender mercies, Lord !

TUA MARINA

THE tall pine in the bracken. 'Tis the place,
Still as a catacomb ; the waving mound,
Manuka-braided, where they buried deep
Wakefield's beleaguered men. A massacre
May roll from memory like a drinking song
Chorused in murky taverns, dead the throats
That hurtled it ; or stab us through the years—
“ This was a field unholy for our race.”
You will not walk to-night, old pioneers,
Te Rauparaha's stroke was curt and shrewd,
And Charon paddled you. Forgetfulness
Enwraps your slumber ; not a foot will come
But hers, like ghost uneasy from the grave.
If you do walk to punish guilty men,
Why, break your cerements, curdle up my blood,
Lest it play traitor—this is treachery,
My prologue, drama, epilogue, to-night.
Traitor to friend and bond of coupled years
That he and I have garnered from old Time,
While Happiness looked smiling on ; her eyes
Will never look on us together more.
Traitor to her ? Ah, tell me if I be.
I know not in the skidding train of thought
That irks me if I do weigh down the scale

Against her, or bid life upspring for her.
Beshrew me, it is cold ; the hour has gone
She should have trembled here. But roads are
dank,
And servants difficult to gull ; a child
May whimper for the moon, one face must be
Bended like cloud to summit of the hills.
There falls a shooting star. How many worlds
It girdled through the æons till it touched
Our cloying atmosphere ? To pass the blaze
Of Jupiter, or Saturn's meteor rings,
At last impinging on this little ball,
A gape sight for the yokel for a gleam,
Then dust strewn in the desert and the sea.
How like a woman, who has Love's white zone
Around her like the cincture of the eve
Round Hesperus—and then she falls, and lo
There is not any glory. Must I snatch
From this one all the imperceptible grace
She brings me unassoiled ; which though I guard
From all malevolence never shall be mine ?
Doth she delay that I may sift the mind,
Dropping the cloudy slack,—to know, to seize
The residue ; to take it on my shield,
And nevermore deny ? Well, be it so ;
The die is cast, the unpolluted sand
Gleams in the amphitheatre for our blood,
And we must drag past stony eyes when dead,

Aye dead to the dead years and loyal hearts.
But she is hindered. Never surge, nor fire,
Nor any thunder counts when passion drives ;
Nor any peering through of conscience drugged
May lurk in the orillon of the brain
To keep away all infidelity ;
And all the repetition Duty drones
Beats like a surf upon a rocky shore,
Defeated by its own monotony.
That was a weka's cry—it may be sound.
The waste night treasures for her loneliness ;
But I do shiver—let it be the morn
Draws with her icy fingers all my thews
Till they are like a child's. Oh, Eleanor ;
The hour is falling to the zero sun,
And I am beggared of proud estimate.
The dawn will nip me till I look askance,
Shameful to meet an eye. The horses yearn
To lose stagnation in a league of foam
Beyond Waitohi. Be it so. I touch
Again the level squalor of a life
Where day is like all other days that ever
Dropped from the hand of a neglecting God.
The chamber I have burdened with my sleep,
So full of thee my heart could not awake
As redolent of merry morn as dew,
Opens again in silence. Eleanor,
A cursed jangle of cross tides has swept

Thy boat from the proud current that had borne
Thee and thy beauty to a magic gulf
Beyond the mountains ; where the day retards
Happiness in her golden sandals, mazed
Between the morning and the evening, so
There is not any place for sorrow there.
A winking taper through a cottage pane
Gleams by the pallet of a froward child.
It is my soul that is so poor and thin
Amid the darkness ; at the dawn the flame
Will vanish, and upon the foam of light
The Orient rolls above the hills, fiords,
My heart will draw into itself and find
The empty gourd of Hope that nourished it.
How chill the cloven sides of darkling hills,
How numb the ripple of the creek that knew
Your laugh that day the sun fell down the sky,
Irradiated waters underneath,
And Love slipped through us when we did not know.
Never may I behold the pine that leans
To some forgotten song of Maori girl
The stream has folded, lest I think thy face
Uplifts its incommunicable eyes
Yearning beyond all whisper ; never look
Through this entangled glade of reverie,
By every dream endowed, lest I do break
For ever and for ever with the hour
The twilight clothed thee—since thou art not there.

NEW ZEALAND

As one who with the first foot of hoar Time
Passed to forgotten gulfs of Memory, here
My gaze is on the moving waters, woven
With no tradition of delivering sails
Baffling hate and ruin. No gorgeous phrase
Exorbitant of poetry pinnacled
Upon ethereal height involves the path
Of the inheritors of pageantry
Dreamt by redeemers, carven with their sword !
Nor ever on the waste and hilly moors
Old battlefields where hopeless chivalry
Of sovran obsolescence foamed away ;
Glittering with pride beneath the morning star,
Ghosts of old castles in the cobweb eve.
I cannot see with Memory's inward eye
The lanceolated light of holy deeds
Flamed through the gloom of evil ; never hear
A nation wrestle to a perilous fall
With its iniquity, and render up
To the Almighty bruised heart of prayer,
Wrung from its tribulation, dear to Him.

Methought that as I climbed this virgin peak
My spirit sealed mortality, forgot
The toll of Time, and absolution given
For the inexorable hours, emerged

Suddenly into joy ; not interspaced
With sorrow, not an oasis that fades
For ever on the verge, but breaking dawn,
Before the Olympian thunder shook the wave,
Or ever shepherd 'neath the folding star
Stole to the thicket where the oracle
Spun her delirium. Here is no renown
Of fabled genii, of twins who bore
The spear consummate of battle, elf or gnome,
Dragon or deity ; but the clear fane
Of meditation, and a sanctuary
For the seclusion of the passive mind,
When all volition of the teeming brain,
Still-chambered from the arrowy light of thought,
Lulls in the flower, or undulating wave,
Or with the lark pillowing on the breeze
Touches the point of heaven in hidden song.
Ye wandering winds that from your threshing floor,
The immemorial ocean, gather up
Fragrances of the forgotten, if their tears
Weight your vast wings, your indestructible
Motion is girdled with the joy of being
Fresh from the hand of God ; and you do take
A path through forests leaning so to hear
Your harmony, until the setting sun
Nets you within his beams ; then you do fall
On range and gully, creek and cataract,
And even on the unapportioned strand

Shaken by every billow, as a prayer
Moveth a stubborn heart, and with it sleeps.
What courts are these that ye so vainly urge
For an echoing answer ; that are dumb,
Dark oubliettes of foam, and haggard walls
Of terror shaken by the avalanche,
Ever above a desolating fall
Of thunder to a ravine the kea knows,
But nevermore the sun ? Oh, surely Time
Here would receive the penitential hours,
As a dear father his returning son,
So loved, and so deplored ! But let me stand
Hither apace in sunnier abodes
For shadowing clouds, sliding from the breast
Of amber slopes into a gulf of blue ;
Colourless to the neighbouring eye, afar
A lake of thought for the fond fancy's riot.
Mothed chambers of forgotten queens who lie
Within a rose's perfume, dewy sails,
With paladins becalmed where Love has flamed
Sole star athwart his consecrated Sea !

There was a slumber on our virgin isles,
Strewn like a shadow where the trembling East
Broke through the night each dawn above a sea
Absolute heritage of Caliph stars,
Outwatching silence till the morning lit
Her undiscoverable temple hid

In lakeland forests. 'Twas a magic air
Wreathed cape and estuary, and bade the pines
Diffuse the symphony of ocean's song,
Sole anthem of a battlemented fane
Entered alone by congregated clouds.
Pardoner of offences, holy Time,
That with thy shadowy flight encompassed
Orbits of constellations, secret stars,
Invisible, though Earth respond to them
With dumb emotion ; thine, all worlds, and thine
Nebulae through the darkness interspaced
As tears within unutterable grief
For lips closed, unresponsive evermore !
Thou dost remember—for all knowledge lies
Within thee, thou canst not forget nor hope
To loosen the intolerable brain
Of immortality—the light that fell
On Babylonian years, the winds that smote
Through Erythrean sails, where dusky foam
Leaps to the moon above Colonna's scar.
These isles that were so silent that a voice
Were sacrilege laid upon thee no stain ;
Here every morn where thy refulgent robe
Flames to the zenith first unbridled hours
Heard thy melodious thunder, leaving thee
With path celestial flawless. If there came
All cankers that do shrivel up the soul,
Making a bloody pact with Hell, to Rome,

Breasting a bestial flood ; if Egypt paled
To the terrific star of tyranny ;
And nothing but the foul dust of old crime
Spotted the legendary kingdoms lost
Beyond tradition's border ; thou dost know
We lay sweet, unadulterized, to the sun
Yielding delicious sanctuary, each rood
A temple for the unpolluted mind.
Airy abodes of shadowy thought that loves
The consecration of the hills revered
By immemorial clouds ; within whose sleep
Dreams float like silence in a solemn wood.
Oh, who would prize the haggard world that toils
Day after day for the disordered gain
Reeking of strife ; where all the gold that lies
In hungry palms is counterfeit despair !
So many broken hearts, subjected souls,
Smoke on its altars, piteous sacrifice.
This haven of antiquity whose tide
Bears evermore unfreighted hours shall keep
All that the glowing world forgets ; a peace
That is not slumber's nor the minster hushed,
Is round us, one with us ; ay, God has moved
Within these forests that are eremites
Brooding upon his glory ; and I feel
An incorporeal chain draws me beyond
Mountain and city, far above the voice
Of cataract or thunder ; till I merge

In the vast dome of wheeling hemisphere,
Shedding infirmity of being, and lull
My soul in its eternal cradle, Him !

Let me be one with thee that I may leave,
Still Aorangi, far beneath me toils
That shall impede ! Though oft the tempest
rocks

The barren precipice thine arch supreme
Glitters triumphant ; thou hast conquered, thou
Lookest athwart the mist below that veils
The world from thee invulnerable ; thou
Art nearest heaven, and dost not know the hour
Is seldom with us we are one with God !
Oh, cleansed from all impurity, dost thou
Remember from thy peak the thorny path
Circling thy base, the struggling heath that toil
To give the wildernesses charity,
With stony barricadoes evermore
Interminably defended ? Thou hast soared
Above the desolation ; at thy feet
Colossal ruin in remote moraines,
Wild architecture of embattled cliffs
Crumbling with agony of silences,
Hearing far off the avalanche's fall,
And never other sound but thunder spent
In coliseum tented by the clouds.
An exaltation and a glory shine

About thee ; where thy slopes are faintly limned
Are apparitions felt ; hoar castles frown,
Sheer precipices are the towers wherein
The alchemy of brooding floats, and feigns
A dreary cell of sorrow evermore !
Then, with the flowing oriflamme of joy
My spirit is upon thy sanctuary,
Amid the wide circumfluent loop of air,
Ineffable and remote—we fade, we fade
Alike into its blue. Oh, could I be
Like thee, releasing all my soul from weight,
The importunity of lonely pain,
The long groove in a shallow circle scored
Even from sorrow unto sorrow again !
Like thee, mount, losing all the cerements rolled
Of Earth's pollution ; greatly winning through
Clouds compassing to stainless purity,
The world beneath me, with me perfect peace.

This fiord is a still monastery aloof,
Where tired eyes that do beseech the morn
Her soft step to retard below the gleam
And let them slumber feel the eider fall
From Solitude's delicious wings that float
Unheard by them that hearken evermore.
She is thy lord, O sea, and thou art led
To her secluded chamber, at her feet
Thy wave is the enchantment of a prayer

Murmuring for forgiveness ; she has made
Thee anthem to inviolable walls,
Chancels of mist upgathering from the foam
The melancholy of thy wilderness.
Thou art Callirrhoë asleep, and sounds
That are forgotten here shall not disturb
Thy quiet penance ; thou art one with those
Who to themselves are a remembrance given
Of a remote and shadowy past ; a day
Is round them with its congregated lights
That may not pierce the vesture. I have heard
Voices within the waterfall that spake
More than was ever graved in holy writ,
Or weaved to music where the organ fails
Through minster towers, and all the tapestries
Upon the altars tremble to His shade !
It may be that a falling leaf shall ope
The door of secret hinges ; that the sound
Of slided air through fluted wings escaping
In undiscoverable glooms of moss
Shall be the trumpets to throw down the walls
Oppugnant to the spirit that pursues
Paths to the light for ever visionary.
The bell-bird has her belfry here and rings
Intenser thought to the diviner fane ;
That chancel where ethereal spirits approach,
Apart, but nearer to the seraphim
In forest aisles than where roofed marble shades

Long tinted lights, and cools the organ flame
Voluted and remote. There is a dower
Falls from these branches, trembles in the breeze ;
And where the light falls variable on a gull
Oaring her snowy breast a power has raised
The splendid motion of the lordless sea
Within our bosom ; we are folded in
Harmonious clouds and sunsets, loveliest home
Of the serenest thought, the shadowy eaves
Pale of the lucent temple of His glory.
As in a cathedral prayer has made a gloom,
The tribulation of a thousand years
Fallen upon the pillars, here we move
Through cloister precincts Time has drowsed with
winds
From the inexorable West. The wave
Tells not the secret of the mocking past ;
The cloud floats lonely from the sea, her heart
Breaks on the mountains ; there her song is sung
To alien ears ; let the pines draw her down
To weep herself away. We are apart
From this hoar convocation of the hills,
Cataracts, and innumerable groves
Pathed by the bell-bird's anthem, and no more.
Oh ! forest listening to eternal years,
And looking to the stars that may have died,
Quenched ere your branches bulbed, if we hear not
The subtle music of the universe

That was before us, and will murmur round
The grave of our last generation wrapped
In ribbed ice, an exhalation falls
From the invisible balm ; a spider thread
Of ecstasy floats where our feet have touched
The border-land of Nature's harmony.
We know not what we gather, but we reap
Charm undecipherable ; and a woof
Pours with a flame of glamour through us, pressed
To her inordinate bosom unperceived.
Oh ! charge us with Thy tender counsel strewn
Wherever winds have blown. What Thou hast
 given
To these make fruitful in us, what of strength
Is theirs make our delight, and what of prayer
In their dumb instinct lies make suppliant
Within our hearts. There is a majesty
Of still endurance here ; woods recreate
Splendour of mighty shade though tempests reel
Athwart a sail-less hemisphere ; the sea
Squanders ablution over the sea wrack
Where mermen lie, and lulls the albatross
Far in her secret South ; but never fails
Her due step to these lonely isles and fiords,
Nor ever though the stars and moon be hid
Late cometh to the mountains' inner shrine.

I know not if the heart ever deceived

The brain that trusted her when ways were dark,
Thought a complexity, triumph despaired,
Paths steep to the far-shining goal, and pain
A fabric in the shuttle of the mind
For ever wearing doubt, despondency.
Thence to be led by secret prophecies,
Welled in the heart and to her scarce revealed
Till her own desolation gushed them forth
To be a strength inscrutable to the mind
Faint with endeavour, this is ecstasy !
To take from evil its celestial part,
Warped and dishonoured, the imperial force
Turned to debasing ends ; in the lowest deep
Of tyranny to feel the chambering light
Through all the darkness ; and to brave renown,
The pride precipitant of sovereignty
Rooted within tradition ; to amaze
The spirit within herself ; to storm the towers
Sodden with blood and tears, where cruelty
Broke humanity's heart ; to wake with horn
Loveliest Freedom in her castle woods,
She with soft invocation murmuring ;
“ Be with me, my beloved, evermore ! ”
Oh, this was potency of being ! .Life
Swirls a confusing main of tediousness
Day after day till the Olympian hour
Rolls a colossal wave of thought that breaks
In trembling glory on strange promontories

Hearts are but human, and would slumber where
Fond other hearts have nourished them and died.
Sweet is remembrance trellising a grave.
But the fierce hour will come, though it do wait
A thousand years, when all is flung amain
Into a rushing tide. Faith, memory, love,
Pity, and agony, and wrath are fused ;
And the transfigured soul no more abides
Within a temple builded on the sand.

Much do we feel who with the woods commune,
Bearing a salutation in our eyes
To every bird scattering rainbow song.
Thoughts in us are as fountains gushing forth
The splendour and austerity of peace
Untroubled evermore ; we hear a sound
That to the utter world is barrenness,
A river of commingling love, resolves,
Repentances, and adorations, woven
As border for His robe who touched the pines
And streamlets with a blessed wonder shed
On e'en the poorest shadow. Far away,
Here we inherit life that has not broken
Passionate and regretful waves on shores
Cold and repellent, with their harvest strewn,
The wrecked and drowned. Streams are our lenten
thoughts,
Holy and chaste, gathering from the flowers,

The useful, idle fields, winds blowing through
The secrecies of silence, manna fallen
From invisible boughs, wherewith we break
Communion with the spirit shrined in God.
Ye that inhabit cities from the light
Of nature sundered, where grim towers let fall
Shadows not deep enough to bury grief,
Homeless, that alway has a home unseen
Within men's bosoms, go ye to the hills
Stand where the forest lifts a bridal veil
Before the glancing sun, and hearken with joy
To birds, winds, brooks, and tufted flowers that
wave

Through pastures and majestic scars a hymn
Unearthly, yet upon the heart bespread
With dew of solace of uplifted prayer.
Can ye not wander through the loitering path
Of Arcady and Tempe in these isles,
Suddenly treading where a song has slept,
Fallen from birds in darkness, and revealed
To bending ferns the triumph of high heaven
Ruffling silky wings. Too much do we gain
The temporal, losing the immortal part.
Less have we than Leucadian youths and maids,
Who leaped with Sappho, of the flawless heart,
That broods upon a creek and with it flows
Contented to the shores of old romance.
Oh, barren lives that have forsaken fields

For stony commerce, know ye not the hour
Cometh when all the trappings of the world
Fall like a column when volcanoes quake;
And with veiled eyes we look athwart the wave
Once floating sails by youth's enchanted mere
Beyond the mountains, where the naiads hid
All day the moon from the beleaguering sun.
Pools with a shadowy ottoman of fern
Come to us where the creek had thrown a loop,
Too happy to haste by the trees wherein
Birds framed a stair of imperceptible song.
They are no more—but, hark! we hear old,
 strange,

Forgotten noises, seneschals of sleep
In tangled solitude, who, never seen,
Drowns every breath of Summer in our eyes.
'Tis but Imagination! Children start,
Hearing a voice that music woos to live
In her soft palace; they do know her charm
That lies upon her brow; they cannot touch
The estuary of glory floating them
Far from the forest to the world's great sea.
Now it is strange to us, the magi live
No more who could interpret; ah, the pain!
Our hearts were those magicians long ago;
But we have bartered them for sudden gold,
And the most blessed can but faintly call
From a remote recess some shining words,

That once caressed the heart from lips a-cold ;
Covering their sweetness with unbidden tears.

Ah ! 'tis the saddest lot humanity
Has drawn from the impassive urn of fate
That in the mirk air of high-shouldering towns
The spinning vertigoes of labour cramp
The wild emotion born into the soul ;
That would make boats of every ivory cloud
To sail far down to the Oceanides.
The statesman, the philosopher, the priest,
Looking upon the smouldering vent that smokes,
Threatening evermore, speak parables
To ears that understand not ; oh, forsooth,
They offer suffrages, shibboleths, prayers,
To children Sundered from delight ; for such
Are the enkennelled poor, who never see
The sun but over clanking factories,
Nor feel a wind that is not drenched with soot.
Men are we, and we do not lick the stones
For slimy offal, and curl down to sleep
Like pariahs satisfied. The sleepless eye
Of sorrow staring at oppressive walls
Bounding the mental world of poverty
Looks far beyond the main to where a foot
Makes happy bells of laughter through the fields
For children who romp with Joy, she lulling down
Her tirelessness so they shall clutch her robe,

Vain images of anguish ! Have we not
Child aching hands, so many prized assets
In budge statistics ; do they not lead on
The car of commerce ; do not children toil
Drab days laborious, to the sullen hour
Of tired monotony ? I look where vice
Comes specious, debonair, slanting a ray
Gilded with blithesomeness to these that moan :
The day is heavy on us, labour waits
With still persistence ; through the Summer morn,
The Winter fog, her rugged frown is near ;
And we do sit impatient to be done
With fardels too oppressive. Let us be
Something the light resembles, or the kid
Leaping within the shadow of the fern
In glades the tui knows. Virtue will give
A twenty years of toiling evermore
For pittances, hard usage—welcome vice,
Hard paymaster, but not so hard as men,
Pillars of prayer, masters of sweating jails !
Ah ! 'tis the saddest of all truths revealing
Fair destiny dishonoured. Men must grieve
At immemorial tears the weak shall shed,
Who struggling fall to the catastrophe
The most reverberating, souls debased.
The price we pay for garrets mullet packed,
Infancy with decrepitude of crime,
Innocence the plaything of the debauched,

Breaks at the source the majesty of race ;
The fountain is polluted, babes are found
Not in the cradle, but the sepulchre.
Dear land, for this I blame thee not alone,
That we lack little feet about the door ;
That now a pantomime of gaiety
Is dearer to the woman's heart than love,
That is indeed love most when dowered with pain.
Oh ! to be homely is too obsolete ;
Better the giddy emptiness of froth
Spun in the whirlpool of a tide that sweeps
Inevitably from the heights to fill
Unfathomable gulfs than mountain tarn ;
All day the mirror of revolving clouds,
Grey, vestal forests holy ; through the night
A recompense for the tired flame of stars
Soothing itself within the softness lapped
Through the aduiced shade. The time has been
Our days were nearer friends to quietness
Than strutting clamour. Never pioneer
Loved labour but his being was transfigured
Upon the summit. Prone the mighty woods
Before his lion heart ; and oft eve's star
Glowed through her veil uplifting ere he returned
From battle with his peers the stubborn hills.
Year after year a sacrament of toil
Purified, thought came like a Summer cloud,
Slow, but persuading from the heat of day

Delicious depth of shadow. Nature gave
Her broad, beneficent bosom, that has held
A thousand generations. What is man
But her faint acolyte where she is priest ;
Drawing the subtle essence of His love
From toil and torment of her globed powers.

Oh, softly blow ye winds where Cloudy Bay
Yearns to that happy vale where I have breathed
Morn of a perished day. If eyes long closed,
That watched me in the vintage fields of youth,
Look farther than your compass of proud leagues,
Never shall they behold a happiness.
Within me wheresoe'er I go that falls
E'en as the shadow of the shade that fell
From Joy's wings ever folding to unfold.
Ye radiant hills that share a blessed light
No more to me revealed since I have lost
That ecstasy of life that all receives
Unconscious as the bird receives the shade,
The airy tent of his emerging song ;
What shall inhabit your serene abodes
If not the thought of them that sadly build
Fond altars of remembrance far away !
They have no other dower, no song makes moan,
No legend like a vine-leaf clings to them,
Plaintive of glory. In the azure past
Not e'en a cloud has wreathed a secret spot

Where gods have smiled and loosed a hidden brook
To gush from rocks impregnable, to thank
With an immortal song the shades austere
Linked evermore to their divinity.

Lovely as are the hills, and flecked the Sounds
With light and shadow floating evermore
Imperishable peace, I would the cloud
And the long stair of gold disturbed the dust
Scattered on graves where ancient melody
Breathes an imaginary lore, and moves
The springs of solemn meditation sunk
Far from the garish day. There is a power
Folded within us that the stubborn pride
The world nets round us never can unveil.
It moveth for the pure and contrite heart,
Loving the holy past and all dear words,
Comfort from unremembered lips that speak
From darkness a revealing equity.

There is a sacred temple, we may touch
The precincts of its glory and receive
Rapture we know not whither, and rejoice
Like cuckoo loosened through the breath of Spring,
That never knew the parent of its joy.
Isles, had ye been where Greece beheld the morn
Touch with soft foot the looping Cyclades
Ye had been worshipped at Achaean hearths ;
Yon mighty talisman of crag that proves
The ponderable fall of the tired sea

Had loomed mysterious and dread before
Antiquity's young heart. Far, far aloof,
Where Egmont fades into the sleeping blue,
Forlorn Hephæstus of the utter world
With fire outworn, furies had flung repulse,
Their adamantine cruelty, and disdain
For all men. Islands, capes, peninsulas,
Ye have no brede of sorrow, if no might
Impregnates us beholding. Magic sails
Blow not around ye, nor a mermaid cries
For the lost foam where Aphrodite sprung
Irradiate, lighter upon the morn
Than all the vows Love ever smiled away !

What if we keep no sacrificial day,
When all the heart of a mysterious time
Moves in us far-descended, if we wreath
No tower, no altar, colonnade, or cliff,
Where Time has let a fascination fall,
Unperceivable magic, to awake
Remembrances enchanted evermore.
There is a light far-shining, yet unseen,
Beyond the verge of our dim day, where glow
Thought and achievement, and the creeping globe,
That Time retardeth infinitely slow,
Shall gather moments when our souls are lit
With inexpressible delight that cleaves
To invocation flowing from above,

Higher than ever highest here has dwelled.
To live through exaltation of an hour.
Lifting us from the dank and trodden fields
Where multitudinous feet have worn a path
Searching for Truth shall be an ecstasy
Poured through us. Far away the trumpets sound
For man ascending, overwhelming powers
That shall retard his utterance with the true ;
The shadow of the perfect that shall be
Within us when the people see the flame
Lucent of righteousness and equity
Fall on the palaces and lowly roofs,
Portion of all men, standing in the light
With marvelling awe but equal to the blaze.
Whatsoever we do, whate'er is willed
By the inscrutable, the path lies hid
Oft through the swamp of desolation, fog
Bewildering, and harsh thorns ; but, oh, we rise
To things unutterable in the past ;
Reason, the sanctuary of weary faith,
Justice, and the sweet savour of shut deeds,
Bestowal unrevealed ; renouncement sweet,
Whose sovereignty is sacrifice, shall be
Crown of all glories ! Never do I doubt
That in the large life of a clearer day,
Loftier than Lucretian majesty,
Purer than holiest thought of Socrates,
Unladen by divine hands of foul wrong,

Where men are more than shadows of the light,
Ay, even stars through lowly orbits strewn,
Thy children, land of promise, shall break bread
Of solemn sacrament with them that strive
To win fulfilling heights ! And they shall be
Dowered with the splendid heart that aches to rise
Above the limitation of the mind,
Illuminated by the lamp of soul !
What though we dwell a little while and sleep
Beneath the drums and trappings, men shall hold
From our dead bones the fief of majesty
That shall encompass the wide world ; our thoughts
Lie not within our graves, but, purified
To the last bourn, perfection, live in men
Hereafter to arise ; to whom our names
Are shadowy nebulae, that do illumine,
Remote, mysterious, the ancient night,
Poised in the darkness like delivering stars.
Thus we inherit from the mighty dead
Thought too impalpable for them to fuse
To glowing words, the trail of Wisdom's robe ;
Sounds that we gather into harmony
Above their adoration. We shall pass
Like the foam by the beacon—still it points
The doubting sailor ; and when Time has slipped
A soft fold over us, and we are stirred
Never by silken murmur of a wind
Bathed with the tears of those remembering us,

And they themselves are memory-sunk, a light
Will fall from the invisible that flames
Fervent and radiant through our good deeds.
Oh, blessed father who in children sees
A vein too rich for his subduing mind
Hardly conquering evil, a delight
Nearer, though immeasurable, to the throne
Than he has soared through all the agony
Of soul aspiring. Be this tender joy
Infinity for us when we are shades
Watching the orbit of a world that moves
For ever to the highest. Oh, ye that breathe
The common air, who hear the thunder roll ;
Whose day is bordered with the loveliness
Entangling all things, let their beauty be
Even unworthy of the loveliness
Suffused through all our hearts, that shall attain,
By power above the storm of circumstance,
And wandering mists of error that retard,
To triumph more enduring than we know !

TO THE LIGHT

I CANNOT pace the castle of old Time,
With tapestry of thought upon the walls
Woven by poets and philosophers,
Martyrs and rulers, but the nave is lit
With all their shining glory; and it seems
I am a part of their divinity,
Make struggle with them to the goal, despair
Not ever though fallen under harness laid
By heavenly hands upon me; till the end
Comes that is greater than all triumph, Death.
The prelibation they have realized,
(The chance souls glory-driven, chance, yet culled,)
Is taught me through their struggle, is all mine,
If I do follow with humility
Unto their altar. In my frankincense,
My myrrh, my offering of turtle-doves,
Some sweetness that was theirs, some shade of
 heaven,
Some light that was bestowal of its love,
Shall be the essential grace I could not gain
Had they not suffered, had not won the way.
These marvellous men and women are our kind,
And over magic pages they clasp hand
With our delightful eagerness to fly
Far, far away from the retarding world
To a land of heroism, magic sea

That never broke in thunder, but a-slope
In gleaming tenderness for all the beach.
What dissonance of age has curdled thought
That loved the ideal ? Oh, how fall'n the eye
That held with level courage unto theirs,
The heart that never looked for other goal
Than the clear peak above the draggled plain.
Degenerate is the mind that cannot leap
To them. Oh, holy pioneers, forget
Our indolence of virtue, luxury,
As you remembered not the slothful ease,
The counterpart of struggle for the height
For ever and for ever your renown.
In this sea-sounding land of changefulness,
Dropped from the cluster of the strenuous world
Into a welter bordered by the Pole,
The radiance of your names is wan indeed.
For we have never trembled at the voice
Of prophecy, nor ever heard the sound,
That makes a people fear, of secret truth
Delivered from the crucible of soul
Some man of agony has burned for us.
Fain would I at your shadowy tombs desire
Some part of your devotion, would discern
A light that touched not your saluting eyes,
Though your imagination fondled it
Like a child's lips her mother. It may be
That even here are feet as sanctified

As ever trod the unilluminated bleaks
Of the far ages, when the trumpet blew
Breathed by your lips, unburdening man's soul.

Oh, who would cherish then the fond desire
For wealth o'er-running, who would not despise
The specious bounty of the gold and glare
So hard achieved, so indeterminate,
For the delivering clarity of Truth
From lips that broke their silence at our door ?
What eyes that would not worship and dissolve
In tears before the robe of one who knew
That never wound but had medicinal balm
In the clear ether ; bidding us to see,
Blind moles with darkness girdled evermore.
And never since the morn that Christ arose
To purge the temple has a grosser clay
Shut heart of man from heaven than our mischance
Of all dubiety : the film of mud
Material of the senses. We prefer
The impact of reality, unhear
All spiritual sound. The orb of gold,
The diadem of pearl, the king, the queen ;
And even their embroidery of knaves,
Courtiers and courtesans, are truer held
Than prayer that doth entreat us, than all heaven
Upon the wings of music falling through
The mystic flight of arches where old tombs

Hold dust that made a covenant with God.
But, mark, I would not re-create the spell
Thrown on the spirit peregrine by monk,
Augur or medicine-man ; the dolt of text,
Shibboleth, mummary of faculence.

Thanks be to God, the heart can not be bound
For ever by such sticky cozenage.

Methought there was a God threw from His hand
A little world that spun far off, involved
With seraphim of stars ; that never eye
Save the omnipotent could know it turned
Obedient or broke with inner fire,
Remained forlorn, unnoticed and unnamed,
A darkened sphere, not ev'n a fitful shade
To eye devout of pale astronomer.

This Being, whose delight, I think, is such
That all things do delight Him ; when He moves
Through the vast undiscernible to man,

That never e'en imagination knows,

That nothing penetrates of ours but prayer ;
What ! shall He count it glory rendered Him
From our imponderable little ball

If prayer is measured with a ruled grimace,
A genuflection an automaton

Could ape with steadier balance ? Will He take
To His own essence spiritual film
Stuck over with grotesques ? Alas, we have made
A motley coat of ritual to conceal

What is not fit or decent to disclose,
The garish emptiness we call our soul.
A man shall give, like Crates, all the gold
Of his high temperament, and it shall be
Laid on the holy table of the mind,
Fanned by the wings of cherubim who stand
Before the mercy-seat. Let no one dare
Be mediator bland, accomplice pat
With rigmarole the votary to disturb.
Let no one stand between me and my God ;
We have a sacrament none ever knew,
A reconciliation nightly sealed
By His divineness and my orisons.
Yet you, and you, that follow where the bell
Of your high altar immaterial
Calls you to penance, you are bound to me
And every little piping chorister
Pouring his song of praise ; be it a bird,
A nightingale : an air-communing rose
Whose sound we cannot hear : a wayward child
Who runs and sings because his heart is heaven.
And here, believe me, is the festival
Uncalendared of contrite heart that holds
God and His tabernacle and His flame
Remotest of all glory deep in it.
What if we never hear an oracle
Spinning his leaves o' the Bible, over-drenched
With too much subtlety of argument,

Till neither hearer nor expounder knows
The why, the wherefore,—pardon! let us meet
The spiritual beings God dispels
To every humble prayer; be it by creek
In murmuring forest, or the overarch
With fret of leaves that syllable His name.
These though unworthy in their substances,
Finite and overborne with sense of death
That shall be (yet remote) are like the pearl
Made beautiful by Him, but unadorned
To its own seeing. They are rich through Him
Who hath bestowal of all sacrifice
And all dominion, but who loveth best
A temple builded in the heart of man.
'Tis better, richer, for the soul to live
So little looped to rubric as the lark
To shade of bramble. When he towers the air,
Delivering the fountain of his song
The farther that he revels in the blue,
Dim to our eyes but nearer to our soul,
He is a parable for us below.
What have we in our blood that we must creep
Too often on the ground? Ah, take away
Toys that we snap asunder, like a child
Perplexed and angered with stale cheaterly.
It never was the truth the heart exists
To be the fool of fools and charlatans,
To be entangled in a web of words,

Be fed with husks of sterileness, and cribbed
The sluggard of abiding commonplace.

Oh, Time, that folded once all happiness,
Dutiful adoration, all desire
Fruitful of thankfulness, why do our hearts
No more control thee to their own content ?
Oh, surely thou canst never find in us
The enraptured offspring of thy prime ; no more
The inevitable ecstasy to live
Thrills in our languid pulses. We must stand
(So fall'n are we) like caryatides
With eyes of staggering and knotted brow,
Bearing the weight enormous of all life.
What drug of Thessaly has drowned the sense
Pursuing happiness as it were a cloud
Following its fellow all a summer day ?
The scribes that have embalmed the idle past,
They have forgotten, or they never knew,
Whither the road led for the fainting day,
Tired, when his shadow fell on waiting eve,
Whose eyes shone with the discs of happiness
Reflected from him at the set of sun ;
And all their deepness told felicity,
Never remembered, never, never known
Now that we end the shallow day of toil
With clank and clatter. Beauty now must tire
The kennelled lackey of utility.

What is the sum of knowledge if it close
The labyrinth of beauty where the elf
Of happiness leaped to us unaware ?
How is it with your children who are held
Beleaguered by professors, overdosed
With more than megatherium could stuff,
Till the poor heart forgets the glow that makes
Thought wedded to the nightingale and rose ?
How happens it when we are in the woods,
The ancient breeze reverberating through
The branches with old tongue the children know,
That is so soft they love the sound of it,
That is so true they never can misdoubt ?
We are denied the frontier of the land
That never was, and never will be, tired
Of happiness. Ah me, the wand is lost ;
The trembling spell embodying argosies
From leaf and twisted bough and rivulet
We have forgotten, we are guilty things.
Alas, we sail our shallop but a league
Down the far stream of Time, and if our glance
Lie softer on one temple in one bay,
Lie nearer to its worship, it is well.
Sure am I we had not possessed the world
And broken all its stubborn harmonies
To be the music of our life if men
Had fretted Time to nothing with the buzz
Of being everything ; if caitive thought

Had bound them fast with cords of formula,
Green, muddied in stagnation. Look around
This pleasant land—what recked the pioneers,
The axemen, of your art fritillary ?
In truth, we had not in this chamber met
But for the stubborn will of men who fought
For their ideal. It is realized.
Where'er we breathe, and stand, and look, and
smile.

If one of them should enter—Pardon, sir,
If I am not confederate with you,
Not called by Nature to a proud design.
I have not your dominion over toil ;
Some cantrip nerve has jarred me out of tune
With heroism and endeavour hid
Under a guise of labour. I am one,
Such as abound, who know the pitch of flute
To whistle their own trouble. 'Tis the age
Has flattered us to impotence with ease.
Hardly have we conception what is brave,
Unselfish, and unspringing to the true.
Oh, pardon, sir, that we are not the same
The dear, dead souls have been who struggled on
To an achievement borne of fiery strength,
Else never an achievement. You have left
Name that we sprinkle freely on the map,
And prate about at tepid jubilee,

Crying "The splendid fellow"—that is all.
Laughable to the Gods?—But there is pain
Within the laughter; like a fire that burns
Determinedly consuming though unseen.
Ah, friend, the shade of valour would be shamed;
Let him repose in his forgotten grave
Beside the hills he conquered, near the streams
He quanted and explored. All day the sun
Has message for him, and at night the moon
And stars remember his weed-guttered mound
Our shameful eye has lost. The bell-bird sings
Misericordia in the rata bough;
The heavenly ministrants, the scattered song,
Have nothing of our memory; they are God's.
I know not if the truth be less desired,
I dare not think that heaven is farther off;
That God who visiteth the world with pain
Hath yet abolished His atoning grace,
The peace that is the lintel of the heart
Open to Him whatever may befall.
The proud sea through the renovating tide
Retards the interminable roll of Earth
Till Time shall be forgotten. Shall the heart
Beat less heroic, less with fire to burn
The unprofitable idols of the world?
When the slow centuries have moved and shade
Inseparable like nebula is all
Our cloudy triumph; when the earth revolves

On her delaying spindle overwrought
In weary circle of the Sun ; shall we
Be sympathetic in the motion hid
Deep in our heart and founded in the sky ?
Doth not all beauty lie beneath the lid
Imagination opens to the brain ?
Hath not the soul a greater path than light
For ever and for ever through the waste ?
Where doth the beam dissolve ? What ever bound
Hath Light's dominion ? What is all the Earth,
Mountain and river, hurricane and calm,
Palace and monastery, but alphabet
Of one brief word Infinity has writ ;
Whose essence is the passion of the soul
To be the chamber of Eternity ?
Would God the silent spirit of the hills
Were the forerunner in the mind of men
Of the Messiah, Truth, who cannot bear
One blade of grass denied ; who can but look
And in her eyes are all the splendours told,
And all the miseries ; nothing glozed or hid
Beneath a lying lace. What sacrifice
Is too exorbitant for rich design
To build a temple for the mind ; wherein
All snare and trickery are maladroitness,
And withered where the glance of Truth compels
The soul to be a music sung by her ?
She hath her precinct where the foot must fall

Still to the rapture of the holy place ;
Light clouded by the mullioned shaft of aisle
Makes softer prayer that wells within the heart
Softer than moonlit sea, or taper flame
The abbess burns before her crucifix.
Art thou her votary ? Dost thou contend
In struggle of the world to overcome
Reefs perilous of many seas, and pierce
The vast, bare main, unbroken yet behind
Thy boat that with the setting of thy sun
Hath visionary light upon its sail ?
Oh, fortunate if thou hast her domain
Alone thy covenanted walk and shade ;
One chosen from the multitude art thou
That know not thy impending glory, a light
Making the dim paths clear. It is for thee
The sun hath matins and the moon desires
The water with her vespers ; they respond
To her soft prayer and follow her ; the Earth
Rolls round for thee and all her joy is thine.

Oh, large, slow day, when Time was dearer Friend,
Whose charm came like the shadow of a cloud
Over the summer fields, with poise of mind
That took the tranquil morning and the eve
With equable delight, thine hour returns
No more to our bare breast. The long, gloomed
fields,

That lie beneath the darkness, through the night,
Her tempest and dismay, await the morn
Forgetting the blown hour of midnight drear
When dawn is at the peak ; for ever the same,
Still with the strength of looking to the stars.
There is regard in patient hope, a power
Comes to the mind revolving its own light
Through mist and darkness ; fullness in the sap
Wells with deliberation, and the tree
Stands mightier for the slowness of its shade,
The mind returning to its inner sphere,
The depth unseen the vacant day forgets,
Untroubled by the phantasies of life,
The airy sham philosophy of ease,
The timid herd of frettings, in the pool
Bathes in delicious thought ; a fountain sealed
To brassy hedonists and gaping fools ;
And all the dodderers who never see
The day-star is awakened to their eyes.
This solitary splendour of the mind
In her pavilion where the light hath shed
Its wavering elements, has been the star
Regenerators followed. What is good
Oft seems impracticable, harsh, severe ;
Eyes are unwistful for the seamless robe,
Ear hath no delicacy for the sound,
Pregnant of revelation to the soul,
Save with the unperturbed, full-dreaming men

Whose feet are for the mountains, to explore
The caverns far above the multitude ;
That they may ope to every muffled heart
Ere death may seal them to a greater truth.
To labour without guerdon, through the toil
Insufferable break the rugged path
With resolution sterner, is the task
Laid on our leaders now. There was a time
The ignorant revered philosophy ;
Unknowing, yet experiencing awe
Within the presence of the future kings.
Their footsteps were a-legended, their birth
Gave aura to the tale of oracle ;
Some border of the fairy-land o'er-lapped
The desert places where they did abide ;
Their meditation was a sacrament,
Their murmur darkly threatened prodigy ;
And Death who came like elder brother fond
To claim his own made more renownable
Names whispered where the peasant lay a-cold
By Pelion, or sweated in the sand
By Brahmaputra over against Ind.
High thought is its own solvent, it reveals
Through chastened clarity what never eye
Beheld but through the vigil and the pain.
No substitute for that immortal dower
Hath medicine for our disquietude ;
For knowledge dwelleth not in palaces,

Nor has refreshing from the grapes of life
Or sound upon the trumpet ; he that loves
The voice of Truth knows many paths that lead
Away from her, but only one is sure.
Still do the ungovernable spirits hail
Light in the darkness ; but they watch the star
Above all others, with no cry of hope
Disciples give the master, with no flame
Burning delaying withes about the feet
Of those who follow trusting. We are made
Such that the loving heart that doth believe
Great teachers undismayed is more than they,
Because its darkness doth receive with joy
Truths unperceivable, unrealized.

Oh, for a voice forlorn in wilderness
To bid the shadows flee that darken us
Till we forget there is a greater light,
And we are friend to the accustomed gloom ;
Like tired tree that leans with scrannel wind,
Moaning, distorted. What is life that pours
Infinite strength to waste amid the sand,
Till it is sunk beneath its pyramid
Misshapen, huge, the callous monument
Of spiritual atrophy ? Oh, hear
Thou spirit that hast dominated men
In the heroic past, and poured a shower
Celestial on the grossness ; bend thy wings

Again upon the waters of the mind,
Making the stagnancy a wave ; thou beam
Of inexpressible glory bid to ope
The oubliettes that would confine the soul
That has a chamber in the peace of God.
This generation vague has wandered forth,
Broken, unstrung, and spurning unashamed
The staff, the scrip, the proud humility
That knew not incommunicable things
Visioned by seraphs, but had greater part
With God—because the humble and the pure
Have their imagination overarched,
The dome of all aspiring, with all heaven.
As not so much as one poor leaf may fall,
One heart break in its cincture sad-arrayed
With sorrow and remorse, but God doth bend
To the unhappy, and the dying leaf ;
Even as thou, O light and life of all,
That art the joy, dominion, and the fire,
Hast jubilance with thy poor children here
Great as thy glory in a molten star ;
Thou canst not turn away though we forget
Infinite thought has infinite concern
For all the most unhappy, even the base,
Gathering the cactus of a desert world.

Soon must we weary of the bronze and blare ;
Peace shall revisit her soft cradle hid

Deep, deep within the heart, too long inurned
By too material days ; and if we watch
With the eye plaintive of astronomer,
Who knoweth the blazed curve of Mercury
Within the secret borders of the sun,
How shall we not discern the path of Truth ?
Ay, let us look. Some witch may strew the path
With undevouring fire that cannot hurt,
Although it flame like sacrifice of old
By dolmen of the moors, full-fed by hands
That would have struck save barred by ritual.
Tush ! This may frighten children ; we are men
Who know the horoscope of fallen Time
That was bedimmed to Druids, Oracles.
It may be we are no wise nearer Heaven
By our own thought that is less musical
Than their adoring ; but we read the scroll,
And Wisdom must peep out to less than fools.
Wherefore, our way of life shall be disposed,
Despite a threatening spectre, undisturbed.
Shall be ? Ah, friend, how cynical your smile.
The foolish herd, you say, have never sense,
Or, having it, denies it, to desire
Memorabilia for their stars of life
To lead them on ; great actions of the great,
Averting truths of dying eyes that dared
Shine pity on the gladiator's sword.
Somewhere there lies a wand of potency

To touch their hebetude to darting life,
That would have gospel for a daily food,
A sacrifice for daily task, a load
Of others parted for the joy of it.
Beneath the scoria of the centuries
The heart must burn like those that palsied doubt
And suffering with the faith that men are here,
Not superimposed like sluggards on the world,
But archons of true living, love and death.
Bredes of old doubt have smothered up the nest
Where grew the young, delivering thought that
flew,
Like cuckoo through the spring, through all the
earth,
With message that had strange and solemn sound
Humanity loved like Aurora's breath.
So be it ; ours the duty, ours the time,
To find the purple blossom and the bough
Whereon the nest was laid ; to build again
That little palace of pure embryo.
Then to avoid the old fallacious paths,
The withered gourd, the marble portico
Where Vanity has pose ; how easy 'tis,
After bewildered years have reckoned up
New systems, new philosophies, new worlds,
To prove them all a jungle. There they lie
Like an old doll a child trailed on the floor
In garret, huddled with stale mustiness,

Cobweb, belated moonbeam, and the bat;
Forgotten, unlamented. Thus we show
With Time's touch and the little eminence,
Induction, in the close-knit, curded brain,
That Seneca, half Christian and half rake,
Aurelius and all the Stoic band
That would have Wisdom for their spinster bed,
Were nothing more than weathercocks who turned
Just as the wind of speculation blew.
Here's our advantage—that we do not ope
Dark doors of darker aisles, a cross is made
Over their beams; they lead us everywhere,
And nowhere to fruition; leave them closed.
Thus the imagination is not lured
Where the great dead groped through a teasing
fog,
Stumbling at last on their own footprints, sad
That all their divination was a maze.
We shall take wing where never thought has flown;
Let the dead's striving lie within the grave,
Not all unhonoured, unconsidered, now;
Since they were holiest in the holy lives
Of Socrates and his ambrosial lords,
Kings not of earth but that diviner land
The shadeless border of Eternity.

The sceptre of the soul lies far beyond
All motion of the globe; the spirit calls

Through ether to the planet, it has bonds
Sealed to us, but we know not our domain
Spaced through the firmament. Alone we know
Imagination lost in God returns
With dew of myriad mercies in our prayer,
Poured on us like the still Arabian night.
Ah, cozenage of our weakness ; let the man
Know what is good and subtle with the fire
Of elemental truth, he turns away ;
Eager for some deluding phantasy
Begotten of a maggot in the brain.
It is himself, his own sheer impotence
He follows with a daring foolery,
As if it were Ecclesiastes' song,
Or smile of Jesus in a glade of corn.
Ourselves we do misprize, make deity,
So little and so large the soul of man.
If he has nature, he has all, yet more,
Take nature from him, he is greater still
If he is God's receptacle, the fount
Where heaven's pure rain is gathered. To disturb
That eider stream is our malfeasance, marred
Through vacancy of thought, sense puerile,
Mad cluster of desires for wantonness,
Impenetrable vanity, an itch
For being something ever new and free
From duty, manumitted from old law.
Thence come the arid ditties that pollute

Lips that have broken sound before the shrine
Of chancelled glory ; songs that are infused
With challenges to pleasure, thoughts that creep
Over the mud of limitless desire.

Enjoyment, always joy, and pleasure vain,
Half sister to abasement ; where the sense
Loses the hemisphere of thought that shapes
Full globe of beauty in the ordered mind.
How else the desolation of the path
Towards the satisfying woods whose shade
Had charm of the incomparable word
Once flame of all desire supremely touched
And burning through the pulses of the world ;
That felt it was divinity that walked
With fiery feet, and healing, through the soul.
Where are the temples in the past beloved ?
Who knoweth where the bramble and the thorn
Conceal them of their pity that is all
The anthem of their ancient solitude ?
Methought there was a grace beat happy wings
Above the portals where a peace had wov'n
Her snare of delicate and wavering thought
To catch you in its heaven's similitude.
There to find heart of age that had not thrown
All quiet to the winds—it were a boon
I would unburden for my soul of orts,
The uncompanionable joys, remote

From all content, the shallow age has fished
From ooze of foundered years,—what Rome had
spurned

Loathing, with aspiration. Ah, to forget
The uncontaminated light of God
In dreary swamps, with wandering marish lights
Our only altar ; what ignoble aim
And insolence of our peculiar time,
That hath all riches, all the opulence
Of Syracuse and Carthage—with the ghost
Haunting, it has forgotten lowly things
That are the fountain feet of happiness.

Oh, miserable trifles, know ye not
It is ourselves are our salvation ; all
The tale of years, the wisdom of the great,
The suffering of the wretched, never teach,
Never unweave the light of Truth—ourselves
Must be the protomartyrs. In our soul
Are deeps where angels do descend to touch
The fountain of all tears and all remorse,
All adoration, all compelling pain
To be alone with God or we are stones.
The madness of distraction, the disdain
Of sober life and quiet prayer of work
Illuminated by calm Duty chosen
To be the castellan of God Himself,
Holding the world for him—this foolish craze

For bauble, fife and cymbal, turns to dust
Or ever we are tired within the grave.
There never was a sound of trumpet thrown,
Imperial bugles blowing through the world,
But echoed drearily at last in halls
And palaces the spider darkened, still.
Oh listen, and you hear the music yearn,
Born in the habitation of the mind
Shut in her own communing; she must know
The texture of her brooding, not deceive
Herself with surface hue. No rapture fills
The mind with irritant poison when she stands
Steadfast, and unreturning to the pool
Whirling of yeasty joy; but looks within
Her monastery of grey and holy walls
Builded for her alone by heavenly hands.
All harmony of earth, all wizardry,
Of trumpet, organ, flute and violin,
Seraphs that are the healers of the world,
From viewless paradise—they can but breathe,
Unwind their beauty, die; for death is theirs,
Like the wind lifting every happy wave.
All things of earthly mould, though cast with fire
Infused with genius poured with lavish hand,
Flow fainter with the ages, till no man
Shall say "This was the son that glorified
Hearts too insurgent to know happiness,
Hidden behind the bouldered hills afar,

Till they were lifted up by magic air.”
What was the song the Argonauts caressed
Their sails with, folding stationary masts?
Never remembered now. Then let us find
The still peace of the human heart that tolls
A bell recalling to the inner shrine
Thought that is compassed with too much of earth.

I know not if these islands ever knew
The impatient hours of men who cannot face
The splendour of the morning, like a god
Wheeling his orient wings, nor feel the breath
Of evening whose soft footfall is the dew,
And know that heaven is all around their home.
But the hot scirrhus of a jaded heart
That in divinely-legended old lands
Eats into rest and wise content is here,
And doth corrupt the pleasant-scheming life
The pioneers have worshipped; not to know
Fretfulness for distraction; to endure
Hours solemn in the woods, and learn the song
The waterfall has scattered over hills
Untrodden and unknown. I think the men
Who carved our heritage would all despise
Some idols of the market we set up;
Glib politicians oozing fond desire
For votes as purchasable as a hog;
Marching with banner to a brassy song,

Caligula's own mob to gather shells.
This corybantic frenzy to forget
Things good though inconspicuous, boughs that
bend

With sweetest fruit, makes saffron of the brain,
Too oft the vulgar mirror and response
To gold and nothing more. 'Twould seem our life
Disparted from the cool and leafy shade
The forest builded when good Cole was King,
To follow blistered roads of dusty glare
Refreshing as a dollar from the Mint,
Aesthetic as a belching motor-car.

But soft ! we cannot have the twang of coin,
Advertisement, vulgarity, pretence,
And all the circus tricks Society
Imposes now, and still retain the orb
The placid mind retiring wields o'er life,
That is its servitor till death inurns.
The gracious garments Nature weaves for men
Who love her are no raiment for the mob
Who snuff the dust o' the curricule that rolls
The harlot through the ring ; who make a coil
For swindlers ambidextrous, slim to steal
With one hand while the other smooths you
down.

Such build like Caracalla—let us in,
Forget Aurelius, and the Stoic thread
Of argument that Truth is fairer gold

Than all the wealth of Indies. What if he
Whose Marcobrunner thrills our palate slew
An old man with a snare of finance, filched
The bed from children, wronged the fatherless,
And turned the widow on the streets? We know
That money gilds the pill; the orchids bloom
Rarer for him than for the honest poor,
Who never robbed, nor schemed, nor duped, nor
lied,

Have nothing but the citadel of Truth
To hie them there when all the world assails.
Wealth is your only motley—But for me,
And those who have the freedom of the woods,
The fairy-mullioned tent of wandering boughs,
With laughing rainbow for a porch, the air
Of Robin Hood, the song of merry birds,
The acolytes of morning, were a string
Of pearls of happy moments far above
The cloying hours o' the world. Oh, hark a bell
Is furrowing ripples through the dawn, I hear
A bird who pours an early anthem down
Where willows wave to the returning brook.
The taper withers, draw the curtain wide;
Ah, friend, here are we children of the sky,
And we do wonder and adore again
Like a still music from a holy heart.
Open the casement, let the morning in,
Brighter than ever youth-betangled song,

Cradle of love ; the mountains and the sea
Guard the horizon, dew is everywhere,
And gossamer a ladder to the stars.

Oh song that in the dark dawn goest forth
When the wild swans are tissue of the cloud
Unseen by sleeping meadows, through the day
Blow through thy pipes of melody and make
Man jubilant that else had too much pain.
Do thou sustain me when the night condemns
To Memory who bears no felicity
When she comes unattended by the hours
The partial day makes golden. Do thou ope
Not the reluctant stop of melancholy,
But let thy happiness be fallen lot
To every wretched heart so it may leap
Like caracole of multitudinous bells
To tarried Easter. Oh, it is not true
That thou and thy divine child, Poesy,
Have fled your temples, unadorned and bare
Of worshippers ; a secret fire has burned,
And flames a vestal for the chosen few
Who love thee evermore. There I would tell
That though thou art withdrawn from me I love
Thy shadowy chamber in the brain, though ear
May not admit thee, and pale Memory
Slurs her allusive song to one who knows
Thee only in a sacrifice of all

Thy tapestry of sound. Yes, I would be
Forlorn of friend, so poor that Envy passed
And knew me not, if thou couldst weave again
Thy visionary web of ecstasy,
Light-laden with all tears of happiness,
And wind it round my heart. The bell must toll,
The dead lie with the mould, the tree must fall,
The good deed be forgotten, and a shade
Wrap all renown and splendour of old war.
But thou art cradled by the reed and oak,
The ruffle of glad plumage at the dawn,
The ripple of the waters, and the curve
Of wind about the gables ; and unseen
Thou playest in the meadow-ripened heart
Of children with their virgin eyes agleam
For early paradise of day. No more
Let grief be too much with us ; thou art here.
What though the world put forth a niggard hand
To those who have entreated it, and dreamed
Its vacant glories were for them, I trow
Some melancholy abbey may at last
Give peace to them that have not loved thee less.

A FUGUE

I

You see that door, that through the day must ope,
Pushed by the busy finger of the clerk ;
Then back on its revolving hinge it sways
To be at rest a moment ; then again,
To open and reveal. Day after day
Through all the undiverted years of toil
Of droning men who never think of it,
That door so facile to the slender touch
Of curious baby, or a timid bride,
Lets in a slip o' the world ; an outer light
To lance the thick-hatched darkness of the room.
The portal is a voiceless eremite
None value or deplore ; a casual thing,
Part of the tangle of the day. Observe
The uncharted things we hardly heed : or know
Without a knowledge—such as breathing deep ;
Catching the fugitive sunbeam through a cloud,
With eye more flying, to the parapet
That takes the golden circumstance of heaven
That very moment. Ah, the lichened wall
Beside the mullion felt the warming kiss
Through and through every fibre of the stone,
And thanked it for the passing step of God.
Often we hear a bell above the swarm
Hived in the dusty city ; just a note

That colours all the drab, grey hours with glow,
The under side of an angel's wing. We hear ;
But know it not, too full of rhapsody
Of merchandise, the scrivener's pounce, the quill,
The jurist's prabble—all the teetotum
Spinning for pantler gold. Our thought's a babe,
Filching the splendour of a father's pride ;
Absorbing all the mother's love that falls
On the little thing—full, full of its soft robe.
And thus we close and open every hour
Like a sleek door ; and let the whimsies in,
To people the imagination full
Of idleness and contradiction. Soul !
That art my heritage and more than life ;
Thou immaterial mirror of divine
And shameful thought ; shalt thou achieve no rest,
Swaying like door the long, long day of life ?

Pass, pass all day the windy clouds of thought ;
Dropping a rain of welcome or of grief ;
Louvring the light that irks a tortured brain
Wherefore will enter, soft or swift like men,
A multitude that gathers in the mind ;
Some ponk from shadow of a charnel place ;
A wave of the sea importuning the scar ;
Thought of the plaint heart-eating in a jail ;
Or where a housewife sings, or harlot broods ;
Or, farthest from the wheeling of the globe,

A shaft of light from Cassiopœia's Chair.
All folded in the mind, and packed away ;
Never to be remembered any more,
Save here and there a chanceling seed that grows
Deep-rooted in the fibre of the brain.
So they shall come, like servants through the door
To do the endless offices of life ;
And we must stand at gaze and let them whirl
Like midgets in a stair of winter sun
Beside a bramble—till our star be dead ;
And all the wonderful delight of thought
Is like a cobweb shattered and befouled.

What knowest thou of these that enter in ?
Which truly were thine own ; which were engraved
Upon the master mint of greater souls,
That thou hast taken as the sorcery
For the enchantment of an alchemy
Most secret and most prodigal of gold ?
Some largesse of a mighty spirit dead,
Scattered through all the windings of the way,
Finds you, and falls like manna to revive
The wilderness heart—like rich Diadochi,
Inheriting the vast and sweet renown
Of such as shine to us like Alexander.
Then all their triumph is a part of us ;
The proud prophetic archons who have taught
And trod the thorny road—be it Isaiah,

Lucretius, Dante, Verulam, or he
That knew the utter string of harmony
Whose ending is the secret bower of God.

If Shakespeare be a parcel of my thought,
That finer essence ever making me
A child of air above the murky way
Too often my sad causey, let me cling
To that enchantment weaved long, long ago
By his adorable and tranquil soul.
Now glittering for a moment where I stand
Irresolute 'twixt good and evil, so
It turns me to the unattainable star
High over my frail footsteps ; beckoning me
As though it loved me even in the mire.
If part of his divineness is a web
To take me with illuminating dreams,
So glorifying, though impalpable,
And truly my most rich and perfect dower—
Shall I not think 'tis immortality
Irradiates the spirit that subdues
With few rare words dropped from his golden pen
My heart insurgent, asking all of Time ?

II

Rested you ever in Saint Mary's porch ;
The searing noon upon the street corralled

Shut in for ever from the fields and pools ?
There's a wild jasmine curls about the plinth,
With flowers like honey prayers, or treble hymns
The children chant of a morning. Silvester,
The Saint who died before a stone was shaped
To found the minster, has, this frozen day,
A niche in the calendar ; when sleet and snow
Make the warmth warmer and the cold so cold.
Not any wayfarer along the kerb ;
Only a wind, cater-cousin to Death,
Wailing in keyhole when the night is dumb,
And the death-watch is ticking at your ear.
Aye—here's the porch, a darker shade of shade ;
With snowflakes eddying in like tavern boors
To escape the bitter earth. Here, where I sate,
Holding a lily hand ensconcing hope,
Radiance, and all joy, now nothing bides
Save the shrill blowing and the film of snow.

But there is something bleaks the whitening floor.
A light. This is a poor thing like a smear
Of mud where rain has huddled, leaving track
Guttered and tangled. 'Tis a woman's shape,
And when it was a girl's there may have been
A woman's soul—delivered long ago
To the pollution unavowed, whereof
Each man hath made his portion—wherefore
shrink ?

She was a losel. She is better now
Than the be-ribboned, plastic honour showered
On her deceiver, though he climbed the top
O'the greasy pole in mundane fair. That's rouge
Part slit by track of snowflake wandered in,
As homeless as herself—the drowned, drowned shoe
Is meek with water and cross-hatched with slime
Gathered in every Carfax. Oh, how drawn
That cheek where hollow laughter came and fled
Light as a dicer's oath, more incomplete.

There was a music throbbed athwart the street
Few chimes ago. Our charity was wrapped
In a melodious anthem thanking God
We were His chosen—twenty rods away
The music faltered and was heard no more.
Our charity had lived and died therein,
Full as a semibreve, and rich with love
Through a belated bar. The organ shut;
Lights out ; and we went home, fast wrapped from
cold ;

And charity drew not a cuddled hand
From placket to reprieve a soul from death ;
Urged on by slow starvation. She will lie,
Through the monotonous, dull minster chime
Till half her gown is swaddled with a wreath
Most pure, most cold—God's silent messengers ;
For silence doth forgive and cancel all.

Thou child of desolation—in the hour
Thou hast the secret, and art part of it ;
Not far, I think, from Mercy—can I make
The formalist my rôle ; and with a saw,
Ancient and clogged with cruelty, dispose
Of thy poor presence for eternity ?
What is't thou hast achieved. Didst e'er betray
One heart to sorrow as thine was betrayed ?
Thou hadst not foul hypocrisy—unless
'Twere such to favour a deluding joy
When grief was maggot in thy breast of buds.
Thy sin (thy sin ?) was open as the day ;
Bare as thy punishment—but what of them
I see and touch this day about my walk
In very shadow of this fane ? Concealed
Their derelictions, crimes, and sophistries
To make the evil good. Still, still they ban
Thy sisterhood of miserable truth,
Self-sacrificed, self-tarnished, self-deceived ;
Too poor to add a lie to wretchedness.

Old bones must ache—for that's the end of man—
When the insufferable light draws near
That is the shadow of Death.—But who should
 make
Of the fair Summer years a purgatory ?
What power hath given thee thy keen insolence
To damn the youthful soul—to weigh awry

The impulse, the restraint, the flowing thread
Cast in the steel of the will—to thrust aside
A being moving through emotion drawn
To sacrificing height, and thence cast down
To hell of its own torment? Knowest thou
If she I look upon had sundered all
The anchorage to God; and turned, misproud,
Sails drenched and torn to evil hurricane,
And Sin's disaster—thence to fall on rocks;
Never to float upon the tide again?
Or looked she with a dying heart to find
An incorporeal hand that in the grope
Of darkness had the shining power of God?
There lieth she the years have waited on,
Each grimmer with despair—with pale remorse
Hidden behind each opening door of Time.
And here, upon the Summer of her life,
She hath begotten in herself with Death
An immortality. Dost thou condemn?

III

Is God's own truth an arid gift escrow,
Revealed through mediation of a third?
Do I not take the essence of His being,
The very quintessence of all His love,
The shining, and the mercy, and the peace,

That make the deep pavilion where He waits
For me, far off descrying ? If He send
To me one particle of all that holds
Him in conspicuous glory, shall I wait,
Doubting like one bemused, till other hand
Has lifted up the temple curtain veiled
By light of inconceivable cherubim ?
Am I not man ? Do I require a priest
To pace with ritual of ordered feet
Far down the nave, where chancel fires are lit,
Cold in the winter moon—but not so cold
As all vicarious prayer, emotion swayed
Like rocking-horse, for ever and for ever
Advancing and retiring, but the same.
Ah ! Never does my soul reach forth to God
Through such automaton ; but rather floats
Like spider filament beneath the stars ;
No eye perceiving, with no hand to guide,
But led by instinct, deep, and swift, and strong.

And more than all desired, if I may shed
Corporeal bar too gross for thought intense,
Dissolve within my ecstasy of prayer,
Take wing to other realm, and ev'n forget
I am a child of my encumbering world.
Then somewhat nearer to His entity,
Less earthly in myself, with thought infused
Till all my being in solution held

In holy and devout suspense, I call
Beneath the tower of heaven with voice austere,
Cleansed of all infelicity ; aspire
To hear upon the harpings of the wind
A chord Infinity deferred for me ;
Loosed once, and only once, that once for me.
Whereat the guarding seraphs with their blaze
Bend, as I were Heaven's most exalted child.
Forfend me not from this divine aspiring ;
Tell me not any other voice can find
The chariot words that bear my soul aloft
Like an invisible cloud—irradiate,
Ethereal, pure, above the robe of air.
Ah ! Never other but myself can reach
The ultimate white pole of silences
Clashed only by the harmonies of God.
Let no one touch me when my foot essays
To stumble for the holy path. I fall,
If God so will, and stand if He shall choose.
Rather to fall, if solely from my heart
Pours the delighted worship, than to snatch
An exigent devotion from the prayer
Some other, though the saintliest, breathes for me.
For, though I fall a hundred times, the hour
Waiteth when I shall find the pathway in,
Be it with doubtful and with weary heart ;
So long outwatching for His loving-kindness,
That Mercy when she enters in will kneel

In unresisting tabernacle, veiled ;
Dark, yet so sweet God's slumber shall be there.

IV

If I should build for my own spirit a fane,
As one who would be lonely through the world,
Disdaining all companionship. If I,
Through some proud appetite of intellect,
Made for myself a sanctuary retired ;
Casting upon my hidden altar spice
To wreathe a murrey cloud for trance of prayer ;
Would any other heart aspire with me
To make my world delightful, to elude
The wile of all things hateful ? Would one man
Find in my underwood of worship, lit
According to my impulse, whim, desire,
A thousandth part of that medicinal balm,
The dropping voice of God ? If I delude
My poor, thin soul with such apocrypha,
Pretended good that cannot equivoise
The balance of a shade ; how is't with him
I cozen to my altar ? Am I not
The blind to lead the blind ? And never shall
My name be blessed like to Orient kings,
Who through the desert, for heart-easing grace,
Deep trenched the sweet ineffable shade of wells.
Ah, proud and pure the spirit that may leave

The last of life, to lie within the grave
Under the dust of œcumenic years
Full of their hoarded wisdom ; yet remain
A sound delightful on the lips of men
Blessing their benefactors. Who for this
Would not disdain the cavalier renown
Blown on the smoke of battle ; or the fame
Of chancellor, of pilgrim to the shrine
Of Learning ; or the potency of kings
Mirrored in shambles of the slain ? Alone
May win an equal palm the mind that looks
Within the soul of man, and singing, bids
Serenity float from the glowing words.
Did Nature ever throw a disc that fell
Like any of the multitudinous spun
Through her eternity ? Could she repeat
For any prayer the song she scattered once
To poets in the grave ? Can light achieve
The very glory of the yesterday ?
To-morrow be the image, very twin,
Of what is dead and buried ? Can the heart
Recover the irrevocable joy ;
Or grief discard the mantle she must wear
For the beloved sleeping, dust for ever ?
Wherefore should I disturb the idle bones ;
Unprofitable ghosts that Time has laid ;
Seeking to smoothe in visionary walls
An altar long decayed ? For, who would look

To muddy issue that will disemboque
From splintered Ganges for the sheer delight
Lifting the water of the well-head lost
Aloof within the Himalayan cloud ?
And if I do accomplish what I seek,
Finding a faith that laps me in a wave
Drawn through the tidefull ages unto Him,
Who, of all creatures breathing Time with me,
Can share my pain, my joy, my hope, my grief ?
Whose parallax of thought consists with mine ;
So that we see afar the light revealed,
God's presence to the very limit last,
Like souls that are but one ? Not any man
Will ever know with me ; nor hope with me ;
Nor love with me ; nor live and die with me.

V

When eve comes wandering in like timid fawn,
One foot in poise, as if her shadow delayed
To cool the glimmering wall the sun has crisped,
Far off I hear a bell—Bartholomew,
Or Winifred beyond the City Bar ;
Where the old portcullis lurks within a groove
Like withered tooth forgotten in the gum.
And here, within my parvis of a court,
(Shut in by hospital, and ghostly trod
By shadows from old casements and old walls

High-turreted on Fontainebleau, Delorme ;
Or where the sea breaks over emerald isles
The meadows of the mermaid ;) Curfew calls
The children from the ripple and the field,
The hay-cock, apple branches, and the plot
Involved with roses—trooping all to bed
Laughing their happiness so I must hear
Miles upon miles away ; or is't a dream ?
But Joy is never wasted upon earth ;
A child must give it, over-running sweet ;
The airy Pallas leaping from the heart.
Ye children, where the apricot falls down
Through Summer's eager breath ; lo, my sere
heart

Lets in through stifled fountains, long ago
Deserted, all your laughter and your tears,
Equally holy till the world shall come
To teach you other—ev'n though many a roof
Of shame and sorrow circle me and shut
The fond horizon of your glebe from eyes
Once sweet as yours, and dearer to one love.
The furtive court, the lichened cope, the shade
Cast by the lazar battlement will gleam
Benign as colonnade of oaks that fanned
Plantagenet in youth, and leant in age
To whisper me of glory. Ah, the song !
You never sang it—Lo ! it swings again
Through the still lock of Memory, where my boat

Of happiness is falling. Ye have made
Your wand recall the unavailing years,
Shadows of their own shade; and through the gloom
Deepening below my casement, where the dusk
Flits like a bat in stealth for fear the eye
Gather too swift her coming, I do hear
The footfall risen from desolated graves;
A whisper that is not the vigil wind,
But love long buried now my balm again.

What if a thought should come, which once I held
Before me like a star; but could not keep
The radiance of its being? Dare I look,
Though hidden in mirk of eve; or must mine eyes
Fall down before that virgin bud of day
I could not keep in purity; but let
Sin touch the unobliterated path
Hope sparkled for a moment? Oh, I fell
By the hard stone Experience has laid
For every man's outstepping. If the thought,
Once holy in me, girding me to strive
So fellow men should watch my path to know
The true, the difficult way—Oh, if that wish,
That high resolve, to follow the light went down,
Buried in twisted surf of waywardness
That never gathers higher up the shore,
For ever and for ever impotent;
Can I dare look and conjure up the past,

And say I followed but the track of men
God made around me, of His image, full
Of His divinity ; and they fell down
Like Dagon and his panders ? Should not I,
Who had particular star to lead me on,
Have found a greater continent, smoother sea
Beyond the latitude of clouded men,
Less fortunate in star ? How base to serve
God with less highly tempered steel than forged
To be invincible armoury for me ;
To take the bridle path of green delight,
Leaving the hard, straight road of duty, bare
To uttermost region of the world ; to shut
Within the last recesses of the mind
Immortal yearning for the good, the strength
That never meets in wickedness a thew
To master it—To stifle in fond dreams,
In adoration of myself and mine,
The lofty psalm, the melancholy hour
Calling to penance and release from God !
And this was mine, O Memory, that giv'st
With partial hand too little of the sweet,
Too much of sorrow ; dropping one by one
The bitter distillation of your tinct
To rack the tiny bowl of happiness
Set before every man. Oh, not alone
Am I in Grief's unconsecrated grove.
But this is left—to every hand that feels

For close, sustaining grasping to bring again
A thankfulness that all is not a wreck
(Blow high the gale, and shattering all the sea),
I know a fellow wanderer will give forth,
Unalienated by the dice of Fate,
Heart to encourage them that are dismayed,
To beat for them with double ardour bold.

VI

Thou, thou that sleepest with the grave to watch
Over the slumber I would fain disturb ;
I will not let my fingers pluck one blade,
Lest somewhat of thy spirit be confined
Within the tender sap, and 'twould endure
Once more the pain of the disloyal world
That loved thee not that were't so lovable.
Tired, tired thy feet, and tired thy shrinking soul
Of all too shameful revelations bared ;
The evil things of poor humanity
That are so many, and the good so few.
Fain would I bring to thee a happiness
That never was thy girdle, would addulce
Thy lovely heart, so silent and so true ;
If melancholy thought would not retain
Her cry, that thou art never more to look
With gratitude's unutterable eyes
For any kindness shown. If I could spell

Enchantment, so thy beauty wore again
Her Una purity, it might not be
That, though my chastisement has followed far
Through mournful days, I could achieve the height
To make thine exquisite and darling soul
Stoop equal to my own. How drugged the steps
Of man too heavy with the impotence
To touch the perfect way. Yet through my love,
Through many tears, I might so shine in gloom
That thou wouldst know me, and wouldst lift me up.

Look, the unkindled moon is on the pine,
Steel-dark like an old engraving. Now the bat
Flits by me, dearest ; soon the night will find
Her oratory among the kneeling graves.
Now all the echoes of the dusty day
Sink like a weary flock about the trail,
And sleep remembers even the tired air.
Here I will be sole listener. If my heart
Entreat thee and thou canst not speak again,
I shall enfold its music in my mind,
And consecrate the angelus for both.
And God will be about thy grave, and here,
Where I have made his altar pure, alone
Thine angel soul shall be His cherubim.

Not for myself alone would I recall
The time I held a part of heaven, to be

Companion of my darkness—now no more.
Would she delight again to be the sun
To penetrate and flood my drugget day
With such an empery of light and love
That every mote, and beam, and shadow and
warmth,

Seemed like Arabian palaces upbuilt
Still in the rosy dawn, forerunner of Time ?
And if she brought my past so truly mirrored
That it should be the self-same arrogance
I bred i' my bone and scattered like a pard
The loose leaves of the forest ; could I dare
Look to her face and say, " Thou art the slain
I loved, yet killed with slow intensity,
While pleasure filled my lap, and thou hadst tears " ?
Or if her chanting face so looked me through
With pity for my stubborn self, that tears
Never had softened long ago, should I
Know that I saw the droppings on a stone
For ever and for ever, realized
In her forlorn neglect ? I will not call
Thee, dearest, from thy sleep ; lest some despair
Unknown to me of all life's misery
Should through thy resurrection wither up
The small and sullen soul affliction left.
For what I have been let the living atone ;
And what I am let me reveal alone
When I am true to my own self—with trust

That somewhere is a mercy spared for me,
That some time God will send fulfilling tears
To be my sacrament, release and joy.
And let me bear all this alone—for thou
Wouldst take it all to thy abundant heart
To lift another's burden. It is meet
That I who from the tower expectant gazed
Into a promised land, yet stooped to stir
The dark ditch of unrighteousness below,
Should follow like a felon to the sheers
Harsh steps that promise no releasing hand

Often I wonder, till my thought is shut
In some forgotten corner of the brain,
Small as the clenched hand of a babe asleep ;
If Death permitted her to come again
Through his dark portal—should I be afraid
To hear what she will know and tell to me
Just as a wave speaks through the knitted tide
Up to the star that drew its motion forth ?
If to the other side of the grave a wind
Blows scent of immortality, a sound
From our unhearing stillness too remote ;
The dead must know the secret, and their eyes
Will soften and their speech make mellowness
In answer to our questioning perplexed.
Then I would ask through one clear word to know
The incorruptibility of God,

The perfect, most adoring, truth concealed
From life and struggle. Though I be shut out
Far from the precinct, better to resolve
Within my spirit divided all the good
Some dear oblatine dead one wins for me.
Not fully comprehended, not sustained
By reason, or the bow extreme of Faith
Looping for ever higher ; Truth would be
Hid like a chambered bride within my soul,
So close that not one other heart should know.
But men should see my lips had touched a vow
Above all oracle, or holy rood ;
With fire so cleansed ; and all revolving thought
Moved like a starry orbit, knowing God.

VII

If I should die to-night, my shade would come,
Timid, as from the body new released,
To find the old familiar walls wherein
I have been cater-cousin to the fire,
And child to many a tattered book beloved.
Although my body lay aloof, withdrawn
From eyes that ministered to me, and hands
Caressful ; never more to look for day
Like robin through the dark edge of his sleep,
Feeling in slumber that the dawn is there ;
My spirit would desire the children's room,

And with their toys, reluctant hid away,
Would find their love within the cupboard door.
And I would hover about time-honoured things,
Through many years true friends to me, and
touched

A thousand and a thousand evenings fled.
All put away, and never more to be
Familiar to the hand—but there to lie
Still as a rocky splinter on the shore,
A child of earth that never will have friend.
The cherry-wood—the true *merisier*—
Green-papered with a newel curve, embrowned
In evening's idle saunter through the hour
Smoke shed her delicate beatitude
For heart and brain alike ; and else, the board—
The crusty King, beleaguered and betrayed,
Less than a squatting pawn. Her love will fold
About them, and behind a wealth of flower
Vased in the coolth the dead man's toys will wait,
For ever and for ever undisturbed.

In that soft time my soul shall come and watch
The silence, and the laughter, and the tears,
Of her who gathered from curmudgeon Time
Part of his hoarded joy, to give to me.
And I will breathe softer than spider air
The sun betrays—softer than green light falls
Through agate caves porch-opened to the sea ;
To lie about her heart that will not stir

Much farther from my memory than a bird
Forgets the thicket archway to her home.

The cornice holds a spider. Many a time
The afternoon beam from the lazy sun
Made magic though the intricate design
Wherein she spun outwatching all the hours.
Even in that last remnant of the light,
Far from the casement and the plumbless breath
Of meadow breezes through the curtain poured
With gusto for the room, I shall surround
The dimness with my patience It shall be
Part of me ; for the very, blank, cold wall
Holds charm unutterable when the shade
Of one beloved head falls greyly there ;
And to its silence all my soul will speak
Unwinding ravels of love's memory.
So, when she looks to faces of the dead,
Of children sleeping by the eaves, the frame
Of every smiling picture shall be mine.
But I shall be a veil invisible
Even to Sorrow's eye, who loves the gloom ;
And when with tears she looks upon my face
I shall be fountain of their bitterness,
Be somewhat of their joy when grief is tired.

Oh, what a terrible default were Death,
If never to the world our love returned

How exquisite the dolour and the pain
The living suffer if no soul attend,
Making the stupor less unbearable.
Ye know it not, companions of my day,
Struggling and never happy ; still amazed
That life will not lie down like a tired tree,
And be the earth again. Ye know it not,
The secret of the angel who suspends
Your prayer, like Moses on the Mount withdrawn ;
Near to your footsteps like the shadow true,
And listening to the fainting heart that calls.
It is the souls of the departed come
To watch the pillow lest a dread shall lurk
Within the crevice of a dream—I wake,
With eyes that see not all the trust of day,
With ears that hear not all the squandered song,
But both more tuneable to a sound that breaks
Audible through the long rout of the world.

Often we wish our thought might be revealed
E'en as it leaps, with no impediment
Vexing like reeds the clear pulse of the brook.
But all we do conceive we cannot say,
The brain hath not the soft delivery
Respondent to the soul ; and it falls out
That what we wholly see, and know is good,
Through warp of structure in ourselves comes forth
Like a mis-minted token of full gold,

Not in itself unreal, but so made.
Our broken utterance makes harsh the sound
Flushed through the limpid spirit like a bow
From the rosy sun low-laughing at the rain.
Ears that would love our thought, whate'er it be,
Because we are the source, will understand
Partly, and twisted, what we held within
So beautiful—but giving it, so marred.
Therefore, the very thought that would delight
God in His Heaven, as coming from Himself
To dip the earth in light serene, is made,
Like anything we touch, the residue
Of something blest, whose shadow is our shine.
Behold, the spirit knoweth what shall come,
Far off ordained, shaped by the demiurge
In clouds, and silver lightning, and the fire
Of comet whose proud orbit doth debel
Restraint of planets. Where the asteroid
Is elemental loneliness, apart,
Far sunken in the vain endeavour of sight
To be the faintest star's compeador,
Inevitable Destiny awaits.
The asteroid shall pass her like a sigh,
And her unhearing shall be like the dead.
She hath not any lot with stars that creep,
The leanness of a planet time hath slain.
But Earth with burlaps of the atmosphere,
And ominous sorrow evermore the sound

Never capitulating unto joy
Leaping from very heaven, shall spin with cloud
And thunder for her heralds. Fate will look
Her blade be very silent, very keen.
I would evoke—oh, that 'twere possible—
The secret hidden like the pyramid Kings ;
Calling the hour devout to wrap me round
With the immortal destiny, and show
To eyes not sundered from the earth the light
Invisible to prophets, poets old.
There, mingling with the spirits who conceive
God's melancholy triumph over men ;
Who touch not any stop of sweetness held
By Mercy to retard the heavy bale ;
I'd take them to my bosom. They'd reveal
All answer that is speculation here ;
Rounding with airy light a flitch of thought,
Shadowy as the fitful reef that tears
A solitary medley in the sea.

Never for me magnificat. Oh, God !
Thou knowest where my step shall be, afar,
What love I shall inbreathe, what magic give ;
What gladness shall be mine to know till death,
Still as a stone awaiting, shall arise,
Where he has sate to intercept, and lay
A finger on my forehead, and I die.
Oh, let it be that when the stroke shall fall,

The earth dissolve within my dying eyes,
A righteousness shall harbour in my soul
That moment with a goodly duty done ;
A sweet word winnowed from the tares of toil
Shall make my heart as lovely by its sound
As river chanting to deserted hills.

Of old we knew a glade
Whose morn and evening shade
Were dearer than the shine
Of all the hills divine.
One flower is alway best ;
And, hidden near the nest,
One bird of all the brood
Will sanctify the wood.

Philosophy can show
Why you delight me so ;
I never opened book
To analyse a look.
Since you and I were thrown
Together, let a stone
Be sacred to the day
We loved and rode away

VIII

The pink of Tasman, or the bark of Cook ;
Fortresses of endurance. Joyous souls,
Who took Adventure for their brother, and held
Talk with the sea as though the silky wave
Fell for them into sparkling syllables
Calling the secret of the utter main.
The wonder of Medea's Argonaut,
Flushed with the dawn remote of secret gulfs,
Passed to their listening face. Methinks I see
Cook, where the royal reeled within the mist,
Leaning upon the rampart of a sail
Bellied below the dipping yard. His eyes
No longer tire of the enlacing sea
Drifting him near unmeditated isles.
Hush ! Do you think he ever trod this rood ?
Mayhap his pinnace furrowed wave and sand
Twin-shadowed by the rata and the pine.
And where the fantails float on branching stair
Not three feet from the ripple it may be
He stooped to pluck a lucid stalk that held
In sap old memories of the Yorkshire wold.
His keen gray eye would mark the creek that slid
Through yonder thicket like a fugue that winds
Through organ pipes to fall at last, desired,
Smooth, delicate, a messenger of peace.
Suppose he carved a name upon the pine,

One word, a letter only—if it strayed
Long after through the moss and fret of years,
A tortive hieroglyph ; why, we would stoop
To let it lie entangled in our eyes,
Seeing no other, for a moment fused
Suddenly with the past. Then we should be
Kindred to the Olympian days when Time
Stole through the fiord like a rower who delays
To watch the sunset ; all forgetting, all
Inheriting the magic of the place.
The father of our waters. If he be
One that we share with islands of the foam
Of prodigal madrepores, how great the Star
That shines within the double hemisphere.
What are we worthy if we gather up
The richness of our land, and falter not
When our remembrance lingers in this cove
Like aureole of his brightness ? Let the tide
Flow ever through impediment of calm
To lull the ancient haunt of great design,
And great achievement. Where a full-veined heart
Hath made a covenant, established it,
Never should any vexing of espial
Come near to palter with the memory.
But troubled gratitude that cannot pour
Enough in thankfulness should be our veil ;
And thoughts that are too pure, too deep, for words
Should wreathe a sanctity that is not ours.

Let us forget ourselves one hour and be
Kin to that larger undiluted race
Who took the turbulent and sullen sea
To be their bosom friend ; who never found
Duty a sad encumbrance, nor the grave
A poor relation screened lest jaunty life
Lose somewhat of the savour. What is man,
Low-lapped in pleasure's way ? A hedonist,
Soft as the herring roe ; a reed that trails
To every stealthy sin. Lo ! here I touch
A rood of rock, and something in me stirs
That will not let me lose the affluence
Poured from a great example. If I slack
A thong too harshly bound, how swift the blood
Replenishes the veins. So, let me drop
The eider cloak of ease that never warmed
One heart to nobleness ; and let the wind
Blow me the tang of irritant latitudes
Scourged by the meeting thunders. Better strength
That knows the Omnipotent alone for Lord ;
That, given the unequal lot of Fate, resolves
To be the ruler of itself ; than grace
Of sentimental delicacy spun
So fine you cannot see the web of it.
Come, let us drop the hypercritic flair
That we are everything the gods require ;
All Time has watched for while the dead and gone
Have blundered through the world, scarce making it

A habitable place. Why, men have lain
Cold in the tundra, parched in Afric sand,
That we should find a clearer radiance thrown
Across the path of knowledge. I would bear
A palm to the temple of the dead renowned,
If such we builded. There before the lamp
Shining through vestal anthems I would kneel
To give in that full moment all my heart,
How poor soever in the great and true
Compared to them, to such as fought for me
When I lay buried in the womb of Time.

This is the vanity of life ; the years
Are given with affluence to such as lie
Like fallen monolith, to take the sun,
The darkness, *sans* emotion to exalt.
The kauri I do lean upon to watch
The last oblation of the pilgrim tide
Upon the secret altar of the beach
Never beheld the dolphin rays expire,
Nor heard the channel music. But the huge,
The unimpassioned, warder of the bush
Felt through its branches breezes that had blown
The spinaker of Tasman, that had smote
De Gama with a terror when the night
Fell like a pall about the Stormy Cape.
The tree will never tell a rosary
Of sad and sweet remembrance—while the proud,

Most excellent, and quick desire of man
To scatter to his fellows knowledge won
With fierce derision of all pain and stress
Is snapped asunder when he would achieve
A greater glory than the pyramid.
This is the vanity of vanities—
Time hath so little for conquistador
Who wills, with Cook, to find beyond the foam
Atlantis deified ; the isles, the sea,
That Joy alone replenishes in dreams
With all the beauty of their votary, Sleep.
Ah, poor delusion of all hope, to woo
A larger day to catch the flying gleam
For ever on the verge. Oh great, and proud,
Your dying, conquerors of land and sea,
Who fail not through your fainting ; who withhold
No pith of any purpose. Time has let
Some bubbles on Eternity's white stream
Float for a little hour, and they are gone ;
Received within the mother of their being.
And this the saddest of all hopelessness—
That never is the destiny complete,
For ever unobtainable the prayer
Born in the highest for the highest star ;
They asking much of Time who give him much.

IX

A bowshot from my casement Wakefield died ;

A poplar loiters in the morning breeze,
Not yet awakened by the winking sun
Over the Rimutaka. In the shade
Its early branches threw I doubt he sate,
And watched through afternoon with dreaming eyes,
Drowsy with birds' delight and full of wings,
The old, old days when youth drew silky whip
Through burning palm, to lash the fiery steeds,
Harnessed, but loosed by every wild desire.
Long before Charon took his obolus
Wakefield had thrown with Fate in many a main,
And still he conquered ; every hazard won
A golden province born for soft renown.
I see his grave, above the city roar,
Not forty rods from Parliament and plebs ;
Too fast belimed with spinnerules of gold
To touch a finer issue. If they came
Where shadows are upon the withering stone,
I know not if a shame would compass them
For their untiring brigandage of trade
That makes the pocket rule the royal heart ;
If from the loud, impetuous wind a strength
Would fall ; and from the trees a holy shade
Glide through the heart to make it pure and sweet,
Companionable to the quiet dead,
Woven within the brooding air of heaven,

Each day I pass where he withdrew to look

Through habitations of old years decayed,
Glowing within his memory as they shone
When genius fused ideals into deeds.
Beneath the arbutus I think I find
Some brightness of his brain ; some thought he
held

In high communion with the past may sleep
Where the rose trembles. So I gather it,
Folding the great conception to my soul,
Where all its beauty hath eternity,
Like every noble instinct of the dead.
Ah, city, with thy gold too much desired,
And too forgetful of the men who made
Thy heritage, it would be well for thee
To seek the temple arch of spiritual things,
Dropping the fardel of the world below
The portico of quiet reverence,
Within whose shadow are the dreams of Christ,
Humility, Simplicity, and Truth.

As sometimes in a meadow I have found
The Arab tent of a song a bird had loosed,
To be one night's enchantment till my feet
Came to disturb it in the motley green ;
So, in this grey, old domicile and glebe,
Spider and mouse delivered to, I choose
A mossy stone behind a clematis,
Where stiff geranium faces out the wind

Scrannel and cold through winter afternoon.
Here let me with the privilege of mind,
That weaves the paradise, or plumbs the hell,
Conceive myself a spirit unobserved,
Moving within the branches where he sate
Long, long ago in droning winds of warmth.
Near me the splash of undefiling waves
Throwing the beach aroma of the isles
League-threaded through the North; whence
 came the race
Dark-visaged, admirals of carved canoes.
Round me the littoral hamlet, with no spire,
Turret, or citadel or college thrown
Athwart the hill like an immovable cloud.
Nothing but penury of ease—and the heart
Sovereign of all that is, and is to be.
Here, in this partial retrospect of time,
Where all familiar objects bear a hue
Most strange, not dedicated in our heart
Toward them when Hope looked joyous to their
 coming,
The grand old prophet of this garden wild,
Where apples redden like the morn's romance,
Sighed (for the heart must ever pair with grief,
Her twin), for all the shattered disarray;
The melancholy shroud Experience weaves.
The eyas of his splendid youth that flew
In its abounding triumph over seas

And continents tired, tired the tireless wing
Of Hope who follows not the mountain tops,
But cleaves the indecipherable air.

With mind that was the plectrum of the lyre
No other mastered; from the stubborn strings
To draw the harmony that never stirred
Wooed by the doubtful knowledge—that was bliss.
Sundered by the inevitable sea
From these dim islands; there he weaved a web
To catch the dewy dawn again, to make
The distant the delightful. Others felt
That large dominion of the furrowing brain
That turned the barren soil of ignorance,
Dropping the seed of potency therein.
And lo, a people gathered here and looked
Morning and evening to diviner stars
Than glittered in the North. And they had tilth,
Who knew of old but beggary and shame
When England heard no mournful cry for land.
But these, far, far aloof, and so infused
With toil—thrice blessed toil—they scarcely knew
Joy had her tent for ever here, forgot
The mighty spirit who had led them forth;
Whose rod of Prospero could turn the wave
Into a sounding sea of happiness;
Where it was squandered on a tapu Cape,
The summer reef of the Oceanides.

Dying in this retreat, I think he felt
The home-thrust given by sour ingratitude ;
The fruit so bitter gathered by the mob
From choicest seed bestowal of the proud.
How large had been the sowing, how austere
The clarity of cloister hours that chose
From many a loosened thought the true design
To make a Kingdom happy—though there be
No inference of wealth in such a plan
For him who schemed, drew, built, and stablished it.
There comes, like doled subsistence to the poor
Without a monastery, the hour that tells
Our memory, unilluminate with joy,
The magic of ideal life has fled.
The thought as ample as the hemisphere,
The generous hand that never would withhold
Till nothing more was left it—Ah, they died
Like autumn sunsets over silver peaks,
So beautiful, so fleeting, long ago.
No one of all the world had fathomed it,
Our heart so sweet and subtle with the flame
Of God Himself ; and now it is amort,
Plundered by evil-generated hours
That wore its shining armour through at last ;
That turned the fountain of the arching wave
The sunbeam loved to alienating dust.
Crusader was the soul ; and never day
Could wear to eye but some parched paynim wall

Should shatter ere we laid the lance at rest.
For men were we whose blazonry of strength
Could never tire of steadfastness or guard;
Could never let the rust of idleness
Creep like a petty insolence to rule.
And we must stand like grenadiers who watch
The very shadow of a shade at night,
Lest lurk an Indian terror, blood on blade.

And some have rolled away the stone that barred
The cleft of their most blessed thought, and found
The cool, dim fragrance of the holy place;
But not the sanctifying face of Christ
That made our life a pilgrimage of grace;
That showed the path, so we imagined it,
The strait way to the oracle of God.
Wherefore has come a desolation swift
Over the armoury of thought. It seems
How high we soar, the deeper is the fall,
How low we creep, the shock is less amaze.
The weaving of bright, incorporeal chain
To loop us to a fixity of star
Hath failed; and from the tangled filament
We gather but the mockery of Fate,
Wooing us with withdrawing hand to touch
Vacuum, airy nothing, emptiness.
Then is the fond ideal gone. I sink,
Withdrawn into myself, and shiver again,

Is all the obstinate, full press of things
A phantasy of my brain—like my desire,
My will to beautify the way of life ?
If that adorable birth of my Soul
Hath failed me, and is very fairy child
Imposed on my delusion ; can the rest,
The common, calendared, uncounted things
Truly exist, or are they but the shade
Of the poor shadow I have dowered with life ?
Is this my dream, my fallibility—
That what I do conceive in truth to be
Is but hallucination of my brain ?
All thought, all power, all light, divinity,
All essence of the visible, the heard,
All sentiment, all error, all regard ;
Are they the filmy tracery of my brain,
That in its achromatic fastness limns
A world and all the mystery therein ?

No ! Thanks to thee, O heart, that must endure
Whether the day be equal to the task,
Or fail like retiarius, Time will give
From his full placket kind medicinal oil
To soothe the spirit inflamed. If heart should
break

For every disappointment, we should be
Like nautilus upon the sand, a shell
Cold with the marcid wind, a derelict

Unvisited within by merry beam.
Thou heart, that givest me my Song of life,
Keyed to my utmost feryour, I will guard
Thy benefaction as my very blood.
For without thee I could not live indeed ;
Without thine aspiration I should die,
Buried beneath my broken vows, ashamed.
I hold it for a faith that every man
Who greatly hoped, and suffered, and revealed
Unconquerable will, hath made a pact
With oracles unseen, who dare not leave
Such great confessing souls to utter ruin.
And such was Wakefield. Though he sleep un-
known,
Far above battle, triumph and despair,
Troubled by no forgetfulness of them
Who reap his bounteous sowing—he hath made
A covenant with all that do uphold
The spirit where the flesh is imminent.
We should be his, and Washington's, and Cook's,
And Frobisher's, and all the goodly band
Who struggled through the fall, and hardly found
The way to perfect duty ; undismayed,
And snatching strength from each retarding fate.

X

The shining cuckoo comes with alchemy
He meditated not a breath, but throws

From the wet turret of the Spring. I hear
The breaking of the wind's suspense of arms ;
The clouds shine pomp above the lowly sun
Far, far beneath the blue ineffable
The eagle has criss-crossed until he fades.
The waters ermined like a herald coat,
Grey with the soft and dappled slope of wave
Lifted enough to let a shadow fall,
Fold every promontory, and call the woods
With name beyond our hearing to look down,
And cast a shade like mercy on a grief.
The salt sea, tired of its eternity
Outwatching mountains, rivers, trees, and towns,
The very human race, the sky itself,
Still, still doth loathe its immortality.
And that is our companionship with life,
Till Death arrives. We sicken of the form,
The shape intense of labour, and the sweat
Of being our own being—like the sea,
I have washed many an idle promontory,
Letting my wave of life surround, to lapse
Beneath the temples there. My mind has made
Entry within deep Aulic bays and found
Inestimable largesse unacclaimed.
I have sunk down before the taper gleam
Darkling the altar ; but no peace hath made
Irrevocable holiness within.
And like the sea I wandered forth again,

Tired with my full volition ; till a sail,
A lift of Hope, a wing, a changing cloud,
Were very summit of a sweetness hid
Below the verge for ever. When I came
To the unwinded place—all, all were gone.
Thus I am loath to be. For never wave
Had my monotony of life ; a joy
Gleams somewhere momentarily through the tide
Breaking upon the parapet of cliff
To crumble in a thunder God must hear ;
While my faint voice is only thistledown,
Puffed by the airy wind a fathom high,
To tumble into crevices of stone,
Companion to the curlew and the owl.
The varlet wind, tattered and torn by boughs
Older than Charlemagne, must laugh at me ;
A pantler spirit in the lapse of time
Filling the topmost day the world hath known.
The most supreme dominion of the arts,
Battened upon the knowledge of the past,
Produces me. If I had beggary ;
Apparel open to the jibe of sleet,
Enlacement of the rain ; a beard too grey
Through poverty to be the eye's contempt ;
I should bulk larger to the inner eye
Of Contemplation that will see the ring
Humility wears wedding it to heaven.
But such a child of gathered arrogance

Of nineteen hundred years—oh, whip me, Time,
That I am foundered with misdoubt ; that greed,
Satiety, indifference, the sloth
The rout of Comus love, are on my shield
Emblazoned for the tournament of life.
Youth placed a frontlet of pure light serene
Immortal on my helmet. What the touch
Coming like thief at night that did deplume ?
Oh, softness of the soul that loses fire
Like the wild heath in fog. I never knew
That Truth had left me, till her latch was loose,
Clicked in the night by every wheedling air ;
And all my hearth was ashen and forlorn.
Not leaning to malignity, not prone
To sly malevolence, my heart ; not slack
To know the good, to cherish it—to fall
From the good company of soldiers true
Treading the battled road ! No ; it was mine
To be the shuttlecock of maladies
Too subtle, insignificant to name.
But last they left me with a mind besmirched ;
Like one not taken in adultery,
But looking for it like a hind who waits
A master where the booths and tapsters blare.

And thus o'er weeded like an urchin's plot
A short month since the mother planted all ;
Sketching a shaggy forest of wall-flower,

A castle of forget-me-not, a hedge
Of violet and primrose where the dove
Could lurk, a part in the entangled sun,
A part in shade, like a corrupted text ;—
My loose endeavour fell derisively.
The darnel was my fruit for wholesome age,
That should with harvesting and sober eye
Take all good things God gives and say, Amen.
And I preferred the idle draff, the scum
Such as a tallow-chandler loves to smear
Because his children's living lurks therein ;
But shameful, niggard, to the fruited mind
Knowing the throb of Plato, and the gleam
Wordsworth has netted, watching old romance.
Thus labour with decisive spade must stand
Baffled behind sheer thickets of dead days,
And wandering-Willie thorns a bird must skim
Like a grey arrow flying ; evermore
Deserted by the jocund day ; and I
With fumbling impotence of old resolve
Not dead, but smouldering like a wrack of weeds,
Think tidy ingenuity is strength.
Thus every duty is encumbrance ; toil
Hateful necessity to me. I feel
The ever-present shape of carvel Time,
Wrought so it cannot drown. Oh, I am made
One with the dusty creatures whom a wheel
Slays with a tepid insolence, and leaves

A remnant terrified, stone-hid, and cold.
The mamelon where I sit apart hath known
The marvel of the constellation drift,
With planets of pale systems dimly guessed
In the unfathomable gulf untold ;
And heard the lapsing of the tide beneath,
That bares a rock malignant and bereaved
By devastating onset of the sea,
Sounding the self-same song the planets chaunt.
But, oh, insufferable, I am near
The secret that no agonies disclose,
No voice ameliorates for me. My heart
Will beat for ever like the formal wave,
And never know the hiddenness divine.

The bullace is akin to me ; the flax
Blue-lit athwart the swamp hath cradled scent
Ages, with only birds and butterflies
To dip their shining in. So, welcome, wind,
That with thine insolence wilt take the sea
Between thy palms to churn it into foam ;
Wilt shoulder Atlantean leagues in play,
Squandering them on the quaking Finisterre,
Still trembling when thou hast forgotten them ;
Thou far away a fifty latitudes.
Joyful for me to find a power endures
Like Cæsar knew it, and the Mongol Kings
Creeping through dawn of Time. How many hills

Have crumbled at the peak through thy rapine,
Snatching at parapet of snowy towers
Impetuously for centuries to loose
An ell of granite. Oh, be thou the star
That men should follow. Nothing is awry
If aught be done, though imperceptible,
To move the stubborn forces of the world.
Be thou the guidon of my lance, to urge
Me whom the desultory hours combine
To make a laggard like a thistle-down.
Oh, lift me like thine earth-disdaining feet
Beyond the arc of light-alluring cloud,
Or Coma Berenices faint and far.

God drew, in contradiction to His smile,
A tier of famished rock—the wolves that work
The Jeddart justice of the sea. I'd lief
Not look below, lest somewhere in the sand,
Like a grey log the Katipo will haunt,
A sailor breaks the parapet of the wave
Flicking his cheek; and in his body bears
The crucifixion of a thousand years
The tired foam has endured like blinking child
Whose sight God hath forgotten at its birth.
The wind may whistle me the harmonies
Of islets where the palm is sentinel
For ever by the derelicts of Time,
The wandering billows booming evermore.

Leap up, ye traceries of foam, to snatch
A moment peace in coralline lagoons,
Ere power inexorable thrust you forth
To turmoil of tide immortality,
The handmaid of the moon. Within our hearts
Dwells your unhappiness, uncertainty.
Here Sorrow is for ever tilting Joy
Beneath the towers and battlements of Hope ;
And with her sad face like the servile moon
Is alway with us when we know it not.

XI

Look, farther than the eye perceives the wave,
Pendent a fortalice of cloud. How still !
It will not move although I watch all day.
Almost I think a phantom army wheels
Along the plain of heaven through that array
Of cumulus on cumulus. Methinks
A thousand leagues of rolling down are hid,
And viewless valleys, in the snowy whorls.
Castles are perpendicular to slopes
Deeper than dark Cantabrian ravine.
Far off, beyond Imagination's ken,
Squadrons may charge athwart the sluggard plain
Under the shining peaks of snow ; and war
Break at the feet of cataract of cloud
Leaping from heaven to the sea. Old armoury

Of knights, compeadors, and bannerets
Clash by the precipices ; screams of fear
Frighten the sea-fowl fearless of the wave.
I'll look no more. The brain is giddy now ;
Full of the passion of the past, and tired
That man for ever is a beast of pain,
Blood, wrath, and sorrow, evil and despair.
Such power Imagination hath o'er us
That even to the solid earth we give
A breath, a being, hope, and burial
Of hope unrealized. It is our heart
Calls to respond the mountain and the sea ;
Bids them to shine or gloom as we are made
Sad or delighted. We are children all
Who weave from tapestry of cloud and light
A fragment of God's temple. We would hear
With the evoking spirit music blown
From the wild bugles of romance ; and give
To airy pencils of the shadeless clouds
The sombre pillars of eternity.

Thus I conceive beyond the last lean rib
Of cirro-stratus, in a meadow of foam
Three islets like three minsters. If I chose
This for abundance of delight, and calm
Like the full shadow of a Grecian god,
The other twain would laugh so inwardly
Across the netted channel of the three

That every leaf voiced by the wind's mêlée
Would call me judge mischanced of loveliness.
Then I, too happy for unhappiness,
Still would desire the sister isles, would think
Imperfect the consummate, unachieved
The unachievable—Hope satisfied.
Within a grove of boschage never trod
By faun or naiad; where the rain would come
Like Vesper to a moat at Sylvester Eve;
Would I conceal from men the thought I held,
But dare not utter. Are we not enslaved
By circumstance? And what I think, I hold
More deeply than the rose her tender core.
And thou, O brother of my broken seal
Partly revealing, but withdrawn again
Doth not thy spirit long to fly like bird
Far, far away from eyes that are too cold
To look upon the sudden sacrament
Thou wouldst uplift most secretly to God?
Doth not the wish to be alone with tears
Make part of our divinity? Would God,
Who loveth solitude, instil in us
That super-sense to be alone, if tears
Held not the quintessence of all He gives?
Here, if I grieve apart from alien life,
Shut in by waves which, netted by the sun,
Make meshes of a Coan robe, I draw
From unobtruding fall of foliage,

Low murmur of a fountain never seen,
And flight of dewy birds ; a sound that makes
Music that never shall be gathered in
Save by the fitful ear of Solitude.

Come ; let me people, with my fancy tinged
By cast of ancient thought, this isle of sleep.
I let it wait a thousand years alone ;
Many and many an age shall creep away,
And not one step shall touch the virgin beach.
Last, comes the happy warrior of the sea,
The Englishman with careless patronage
Of shadowy Cape he names ; then sails away
To stumble upon archipelagoes,
Shoals, continents, and rivers thick with reed
Where he will find the air of Abraham
Unmoved in sluggish pools four thousand years.
Yes ; let him be forerunner in my nook.
His yawl hath floundered through the coral gate,
And mermaids have fled thence where England
gazed
From eyes as blue as their enfolding seas.
That happy band of men who scorned to know
The nerves of lesser children. When the threat
Came large their soul was greater. Such the joy
Of striving aye for England it became,
Like a bird's morning melody, a part

Of life as Heaven ordained it. So the task
Fulfilled in duty done, their spirit turned
With an Olympian zest to frolic days ;
And beauty was their constellation broad.
There Jenny threw the smile a frigate loved—
Nay, line-of-battle ship— and every man,
With pride of battle in his blood, held fast
Above all else to cult of frolic girls.
To caper as though earth were Fiddlers' Green,
Rum, shag, and shining dollars, easy love
(And sword-play with the French to top them all) ;
That was a pantomime—but harlequin
Slapped with a potent sword the arch where-
through

Gleamed morning with a tumble of far sails.
Forgotten then the windfall of a smile
That warmed the frozen marrow in the bones,
Making one think the pale Magellan clouds
A dream. Forgotten ankles trim and arms
So rounded 'twere a sin to let them slip
Their cable from the breast—and, ho for War !
Give me the spacious heart that turns the way
To smile of beauty ; but hath element
That only solitary Duty knows.
Some footsteps we may guess have folded down
The patine of pale moss beneath the palm ;
And voices have re-echoed through the wood
With sound that to the rock of Quiberon

Or Basque made answer of the thunder. Here
I conjure up the far-delivered flame,
The cannon shaking all the Channel isles,
Keeping for England her unfettered air.

But they are gone. Only to me shall come
The air blown over wave and reef and palm,
With not one other face to listen to it.
Oh, envy me, that I shall be alone,
Like the clear eye of the astronomer
Watching the dykes of Mars, that were built up
Ere the gorilla was the lord of earth.
Like Dantes, I shall leave my Castle D'If
Only to be a film in sepulchre
In the vast circumverging sea; my boat
Shall bear me when my dying hands shall thrust
The little strength I have through thickening wave.
And every time I lift the weeping oar
The drops shall be my last long thoughts that fall
For ever to the earth; to be no more
My secret Kingdom, holding in suspense
The being I was made. So I shall sink
Deeper than plummet ever shall amaze
The silent, half-lit creatures of the ooze;
Be one with them that are the spoil of Time,
Gotten with his tense hand beneath the sea.

Ere God shall call me from the beaten field

Where toil no longer loads my harvest full ;
When what He hath ordained should come to me
Has passed into the motion of the world
(Not in itself excrescence, but a mould
Shaped to the huge endeavour of the globe) ;
I shall embattle all my fugitive hope
Behind this coral reef ; to seek a heaven
The pool of my own stirring morn and eve.
Like all the men and women who have found
Animal life a sheer deceit, a gourd
Withered in taste and substance, I shall look
Ever upon the breeze, the canticle
Of towering birds, the tide ; to ravel out
The staple of full thought. And I shall probe
These simple, marvellous delights dispersed
Like a bride's seed of blessing at the porch ;
To win the glory of their diligence,
The secret of their fused eternity,
And their delaying not at dark and dawn
To be the symbol of God's going forth.

Here, if I look through Catherine-window leaves
Looping a turquoise acre of the main,
In small I see the universe of foam.
The whiteness where a gull will dip to spy
Chance-medley of the deep-encumbered sea
Holds an apocalypse the seer world
Carries within her wheeling evermore

From the uttermost unto the uttermost.
Ah, teasing sight and sound permitted men
To know, as far as eye and ear may learn,
Like a poor scholar with the abacus.
But why the coloured beads make harmony
Of numbers, or opposed, his heart will ache
To solve the riddle. So, the elements
Come to me like the gossamer at dawn
Floats from the night ; and whither it shall go,
And where it has been cradled, I ignore.
But I can never leave the sorcery
Of the unknowable. The blue expanse
Of wave is yielding liquid melody
Pealing about the rocks within my mind
Like bell-buoy swaying to the sunken reef ;
But what it utters never do I know,
More than the sea-fowl in her nest can prize
The carving of the precipice, her home.

Hark ! Hark ! Diana's horn.
Hide, my merry men, and lean
Where the water-course has torn
Thorough crevices unseen.
Not a bird will crisp or preen,
Though it be the top of morn.
Hear, hear Diana's horn !

Hark ! Hark ! Diana's horn.
Piercing glory through the boughs ;

Madly we are overborne
By Olympian airs that drowse.
We are sunk beyond all vows ;
Spear and quiver overworn.
Hear, hear Diana's horn !

Hark ! Hark ! Diana's horn.
Far away, below a peak,
Haunts a bugle song forlorn
That no man may ever seek ;
Mortal man shall never speak
Love that turneth him to scorn.
Hear . . . hear . . . Diana's horn !

XII

This is the round earth—In my sept of mind,
Enclosed by pale conclusive from the rest,
So never any soul may enter in
Completely, be my shadow, fire, or strength,
I am the microcosm of them all ;
The creatures made like me. Can I select
From all their humour, idiosyncrasy,
A portioned nerve, like stop to play upon,
And beg you listen to the song of man,
That I must know because it is myself ?
Silent Necessity has never made
One man so like another, he is he.

And spite of all enforcement, I should lapse
Upon a marred endeavour to be true
Toward likeness and unlikeness to myself ;
And what was beauty, truth, and heaven concealed
Come through my formal singing tense and bare.

Let me be my own mind's inquisitor
To rack the secret out. Yet, Truth is hid
So close behind a velvet visor mask
That thou, my soul, knowst not her lineaments
As God created them. I cover up
Features I will not love because they tell
The worthlessness of what I do accord
With pleasure. Somewhat of the Stoic school
Is warp and woof of Conscience, unavowed
To this way or the other ; who hath eye
For the strict middle path that I have loathed
Always because God was the architect.
I, child of heaven with my stain-spotted robe ;
Wilful with knowledge and laborious guile
Culled from my paramours of worldly lore,
Fret me if any shape disturb my brow
Of battenning thought on wickedness and gold.
How stand I then with Truth who shows severe
The alienation of my heart from right ;
Who will not soften for my quaking feet
One stone, not ev'n to Jesus' self denied ?
Ah, Truth, I know not if thy face is sweet,

Thyself a blessing ; for my days have been
Led through the quags of evil, and my sight
Is muddied with the feculence of doubt.
Would'st know me if I held with shame thy robe,
Pressing the folds to reassure myself
I had thee safe beyond all disarray
Of thought encumbered with old felonies
I have conceived 'gainst righteousness ? I'd lief
Tread where thy foot should not be all ashamed
To guide me ; Evil has beleaguered me,
And I have followed her unequal star ;
Before the sin so bright—achieved, so base.

I wonder if my soul came unto me
Far back delayed through many an eery change ?
Was it the lamp of an Athenian lord
Who touched the topmost bough of life and joy
With Pericles, with Sappho ? Did I look
Through heavy-lidded eyes at Nero's pimps
Drugged with red wine and murder ? Ovid knew
The thing the Imperator would conceal.
Were we entombed at Tomi ; did we quaff
Deep the dark vintage of antiquity
To drown our grief ? Perhaps Ambubajae
Sang to my drowsy ear, and thought of sands
Lapping the Syrian oasis.—Drop, drop
Oh, Time, thy melancholy curtain, weaved
Too much from sorrow and remembrance drear ;

Lest I do search too close to my dead past.
Starting a terror that will make me look
Never again to thee. Yes, I have been
So twilled to my environment, I wore
The supple look, magnanimous, the sleek,
Proud, lustful, treacherous, bold, impotent ;
Carried within my bosom bird and swine—
Now saviour to my brethren, now a slave
To the libidinous and cruel night.

So are we children of our heritage ;
Made carnal, spiritual, by the fold
Wrapping us loosely as we grow in strength ;
Become the harlot or the nun ; the sweet
And blessed light of heaven, or murky air
Batswing of brothel. Thou, O God, hast made
Our circumstance, and often we are hid
From thy sustaining love ; we cannot hold
The sanctity thou givest. Lift me up !
Inscrutable though all thy judgments be ;
If my poor step must stumble in the mire,
Forget me not for my infirmity.
Ah, if my soul has played the harlequin,
And like the puppet of the pantomime
Changed the integument from sea to air,
Palace or jail ; if, like the wave of Time
I have forgotten the emotion breathed
Through me when I began to look on earth—

How tired, tired, tired ; how fretful of the gain
That I have struggled for, the gossamer
Sliding within my grasp. When Aaron changed
His rod to serpent did I not look down
With cozened eyes ; and Pharaoh made with me
A sigh of dreadful fear. I knew the stone
Founding the pyramid, I saw the blood
Ooze for the mortar. Once Archimedes
Drew me the parable of Titan force
To shake the rugged earth. All, all are gone.
The learning I have won with beggary
Becomes a tribulation and a scoff.
Truth that inhabited their altar graved
Lies like an adder by a ruined arch
Pillared in Thebes ; and all the many shapes
I have been guiding star for make a sleep.

Wherefore has come from our monotony
Of proving ever false the painted true
A staleness in the mind. Of what accompt
To take the heaped up riches of the past,
If there is not one man hath need of it ?
If Adam were a sophist, shall I nurse
The axiom he marvelled with, and prove
The round earth flat ? And when the night makes
moan

Shall I lie shivering in the matted grass
With slimy paddocks, sith I dare not stand

Lest Satan stab me in the knotted gloom ?
God did not make me for the countenance
Of thought exploded ; did not give me brain
To play mnemonics with old bric-à-brac
Which had a faint, fine meaning long ago.
Something it is to gain a pathway sure
Beyond the dismal swamp, the blackness passed
The fair land blown with February rains
Bowed along all the verge. Remains the end
We are created for—to single out,
Fight and endeavour, triumph and endure.

Like an old tree that has outwatched the stars,
And knows that Nature never can be snared
To leave her rugged path, my soul that hid,
Submissive, innocent, when first it lay
Concealed in primitive man, can not forget
The splendour of the fable once believed.
Neither can I assume the face to think
True is the false that some Diogenes
Made surly answer to benighted fools.
What is Experience but God's manna thrown
To feed the hungry soul that cannot live
Without His sustenance ? Oh, heaven forbid
That to our voluntary feet which press
To higher equity a chain must cling,
A murderer of sweet thought, once forged for hearts
Beating for freedom ever and for ever.

For all the lapsed and broken-winged desires
To reach the Unknowable the heart is sick.
We that have cast upon the troubled wave
Bread to return again through many tears ;
Can we establish, hope to rectify,
The inconstant smile of God who turns away,
Leaving us with imperishable desire
To be a part of Him ; to find the path
His angels tread, who waver like the corn
Beneath the setting sun, before His flame ?

XIII

Doubtless, if God had willed, a greater soul
Had compassed men ; and to the Infinite
The struggle had been nearer. But He knows,
Who hath accomplished all, foreseeing all ;
All dedicated, all intensified,
To be their own fulfilment. We shall make
Through boundless issue of far-flowing streams
The ford to reach the farther bank, whereon
Lie all the quiet witnesses of God ;
Souls who have sought, and found the Paraclete.
God will outshake the thunder with His step ;
Darkness shall be His chamber if we dare
Ope eyes before the glory of His coming.

Oh, Father, if Thy splendour be too high
For us to probe save in the questioning
Of all Thou art ; it may be yonder star
Whose light hath taken cycles of cold years
To reach our vestiges may find Thee near ;
Knowing Thine awful Spirit as a child
Learneth the fondness of the mother's smile.
The whiteness of one star may be the flame
Of knowledge at the centre. Oh, 'tis ill
To think the innumerable dead who broke
The stubborn glebe of life have watched the fall
And rise of that magnificent abode
Of God fulfilling all things ; and none knew
His sovranity was shining. I will dare
To wander in my thought from earth that cloy
With too much of desire—to look, to find,
In the far brightness God made manifest,
Illuminated, and the ultimate
Conception of the beings there. Perhaps
The star a babe may watch into a cloud
Over the wood, that shuts it in, may be
The home of those most fortunate, most blessed,
Whom God has chosen, from the myriad cast
Through His eternity, for truth revealed.
Oh, bitterness for the uncounted dead.
To seek, to ponder, agonize, aspire ;
Die with the thirst to know Him unappeased ;
While wheeling nightly to the cresset earth

The star has shone to unresponsive eyes,
Blind, blind, that knew not God within His fane.
Whither have led jejune philosophies,
Shining with their own phosphorescence pale ?
Where are the revelations too beloved,
Now but the symmetry of idle tales
Not lulling even children ? Thou, O God,
Hast teased us with such texture. If it be
Another world doth hold Thyself revealed,
How canst Thou count it for a wickedness
We have not been so blest ? How could we know
That nightly in Thy temple silvery-poised
Beyond the Pleiades Thyself wast one
With larger souls than ours ; who long ago
Met Tribulation ere we knew her face,
Older than shredded hills ; who by the fire
Of agony were purified to Thee ?

Sun-worshipper be thou, O Earth, lament
No more the Inconceivable. Behold,
He is within that arc of glory flamed
Over the tired sea when Night has weaved
Sleep and perpetual dream for all the world.
Oh, think of it, thou earth of many tears.
Remember all the martyrs who have died
To show Thee, if they might, the glowing path
Which thou wouldst not accept. Oh, irony
Of Providence, to slay the fairest souls

Ever were squandered to the world ; to find
Nothing to take their place but sullenness,
Stupidity, and arrogance unhealed.

Earth, I must be like one who finds at last
Thou art not all his duty. If we break
The salutary bonds of youth, to breast
The surges, and the desert, and the hills,
Only to build a nest for loving hearts,
And little children to be deities ;
And, last, to lay the body in the grave—
Shall we not turn the fascinated thought
From old enchantment ? Earth, thou art my
home,

My providence, my comforter, my grave.
But evermore mine eyes are turned from thee,
Though not ungrateful for thy tenderness
That has been softer than my mood deserved.
But thou wilt never know, or know too late
For any poor believer now with breath,
All the transfiguration deified,
Familiar to the eyes of lordlier men,
Encompassing their daily life, their death.

Oh, men, who strive, and hope, and die with me ;
Oh, hearts that are the riddle of our pain,
And our delight ; how will it be with us
When God is in our life, and we partake
His Essence as we breathe the loyal air ?

I know not if our nature shall go forth
Like the indomitable wave that curves
League-long through latitudes of light and dark,
As something driven by the hand of God
That no small thing of all the globe can stay ;—
A being given a new glory, shaped
Unlike the trembling creature that would know
The taste of evil ere it touched the pure.
Such shade are we of goodness that our sleep
Even is fretted by the dross of earth.

Far out at sea men pray to-night, “ O Lord !
Have mercy on the King ; be Thou his stay.”
Ah, bitter fruit within the mouth—we know
Through all the land the King is one with Death.
Not any more now than the womb-cold child ;
Not so much as the wind that breathes a flower
So soft the motion is invisible.
Yet, Thou, O Lord, permittest at Thy feet
The useless, late imploring of the men
Who give Thee all their suppliance—for Thou
Hast slain the pitiable prayer before
Thine altar hath received it. What is man ;
And what art Thou ; that even our deep of soul
Made manifest in tears is nothing worth ;
Since Thou hast shut us in, and never word
May let us know Thine entity. O God,
Thus to deprive Thy creatures of Thine aid

They stumble for in darkness. Is Thy soul
Too limitless to feel the limit thrown
Even around the largest of Thy thralls,
Creeping to find Thee near ? Art Thou benumbed
By countless generations of old wrong,
The wicked, and the foolish—till Thy wrath
Has burned Thy Mercy, and Thy smile is turned
To a tormenting irony that makes
The tears of men a foolishness ? Forbid,
O, God, forbid that everlasting night
Shall lie upon the arching world of thought ;
Dark, dark as the intense beam of the sun
Upon the wasted sight. Have we thus toiled,
Yea, those before us through a million years,
To touch Thy robe, and followed ever agleam
Of glory that hath failed us ? It is good
The labourer hath his hire. But, wilt Thou pay
The monstrous debt Thou owest unto us ?
The imperishable heart of man has held
Thee fast in shadowy splendour ; is it not
As holy as Thy angels ; is our grief
Less fruitful of Thine alms than joy that sings
About Thy Courts of Glory ? I would fain
Believe the miserable thank me most,
As wanting joy the most ; and surely Thou
Art not below my charity to grief—
The creature Thou hast made a light to Thee ?
Look ! The unconquerable star of morn,

Too steely for the prying telescope,
Heralds with greater flame than white Capella
The smooth, far-sunken sun. Is that the abode
Of wanderers like the men and women here ?
Is that supreme dominion of all light
Wracked with our melancholy dread that life
Lies like a shell upon the shore—to be
Forsaken, and forgotten, and foredoomed,
Sport for the passive atmosphere. Hast Thou
Revealed to them thereon what is denied
To us appealing ? Thou, O Lord, hast made
Equal in stature of the soul the shapes
Moving upon the planets. Canst Thou give
To these infinity of Truth and Joy,
To those the miserable husk of Doubt ?
They cannot be a nearer part of Thee ;
For we are Thine alone, and Thou art us.
And though we wander evermore delayed
By a malignant hour, we turn to Thee.

XIV

The lapwing thought that leads me from the nest
Holding the secret I would fain disturb—
Ah, teasing strength of brain that God has dowered
With somewhat of His Majesty ; yet flawed
With imperceptible weakness which we prove

For ever and for ever when we probe.
I grasp a thought that shall attain an end
Above the faculty of words ; I lean
My spirit to infinity, to catch
A gleam beyond the planetary world.
A moment I am victor ; then, the fall,
Eternally the shadow. My poor thread
Of labouring light is scattered like the plume
Of tenuous comet fading. I have snatched
A partial thread slack clinging to my hand ;
The farther end is where the sunbeams join
The frontier of a land we never knew.
Ask, and it shall be given you, said He.
But He has looped our path with obstacles,
A criss-cross of amaze. Our very eyes
See not one thing a whole. We are allured
Sidelong to glittering valleys full of bones,
Under the turf, of men who straggled down ;
The incomplete but chosen sons of God,
Filled with His spirit but denied His grace.

What is anticipation but the gleam
Of coming hail that leaves the stark field cold ?
Hadst ever thou a joy soft-conjured up
That left thee happy with no happiness
Possible for thee in the rich round world
Coequal with that triumph ? No—no—no—
Janus that looked with level eyes to war

And peace was not indifferent like Joy
To thy extremest prayer. She poured for thee
Her draught Olympian ; but her shining cup
Retained the last full ripeness of the vine
Thy very adoration craved. She held
To other lips the fragrance, leaving thee
Unsatisfied, unthankful, unbenign.

And sorrow is ever near ! Ah, bolt the door,
Lest the lush curls of children turn to dust
Beneath her numbing hand—lest all thy life
Depart with the departing breath of one
Who loves thee as the cloud loves the last ray
Of the depending sun ; lest with the eyes
That hold thy spiritual image, loved by love
Undoubting, fades the morning of the world
For thee in death, and thou art desolate.
Oh, closest friend we love not, Sorrow pale,
Who sparest me to strike a dearer heart
Full wedded to all innocence and love,
Touch not the border of her robe ; but shoot
Thy sharp sleet through my bones till I am one
Finding no warmth of joy, nor any more
A smile in the day-break, in the eve a breath
Submissive like a woman's love to soothe.
Press me the hyssop, if thy hand must fall
Upon the lintel of my door ; perceive
No other in this house. For I am made,

By Time and dereliction of my dues,
Least worthy to be blest. For we are trash
If we make no atonement to the earth
By raising it a little. Silence, rest,
Be my reward, and all forgetfulness,
Save in one bosom bearing evermore
The torch I lit with my caressing hand.

Oh, world too old for disappointment's hour
To cark thee any more, Time cannot tell
A grief thou hast not known. And I will be
A child of thy submitting strength and pain ;
Too proud to weep for any load I bear,
And shining with reflected light through all.
I am the conqueror though I am slain,
If to my spirit true. So let it be ;
No—never shall I cry aloud though Fate
Cutting a swath through human life, let fall
Harshest on me her wayward sullen blade.
Once, Time was all awry—But now I smile,
Thanking the good intent Fate folded up,
Unknowing, in her fardel. Surely, the blind,
Forbidding Fury misses half her aim,
And when she would be devilish is our friend.

Yes, I have gathered from the stony field
Fate chose for me a hidden recompense.
For every stone, I think, has shielded flower

From wind with agony of snow-heaped cloud.
Without that chastening blow I had not sailed
To that delicious land that held thee, dear,
Awaiting me ; another hand had culled
The unobtrusive rose of all the world
Ere I had found the trellis. Dear, thy face
Breaks through the darkness, letting slips of gold
Lie on the furrowed field of wretchedness,
Every furrow a sorrow. Thou art here,
And I have thankfulness within my breast.
The world I dimly probed in youthful dreams
Long, long ago dissolved ; and I have left
The moorland of the sunrise where I stood
Looking 'neath shading palm for fairy gold,
And dewy paths to gulfs of ample shore
Spread like a praying fjord. But thou art here ;
And disappointment like a withered leaf
Slides to the verge away at lightest sigh
Embalment of thy love. Oh, take all power,
All pride, pre-eminence, all wizardry
To win the earth's full riches—leave me love
That wears but constancy for woof, and brings,
Like a dim compline bell, peace, grace, and kind
Memorial of soft thought in softer word.
Thine, dearest, all are thine ; and so I let
The footfall of the searcher for the gold,
Renown and pomp, desert me in the glade
Where thou art fountain, bird, and song, and palm.

This for the eyes that lit
A lamp before my feet
To show life incomplete,
Though Love encircle it,
Unless it intertwine
With sacrifice divine.

To her alone I give
The last full thought withheld
From words the tongue has spelled ;
Where secrecy may live
As sweet as only she
Can bid a thought to be.





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